DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 368 511 PS 022 350

AUTHOR	Rutherford, Barry; And Others
TITLE	Parent and Community Involvement in the Middle Grades. Evaluating Education Reform. Literature Review.
INSTITUTION	RMC Research Corp., Denver, CO.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	[93]
CONTRACT	RR91172008
NOTE	100p.; For Commissioned Papers, see PS 022 351.
PUB TYPE	Information Analyses (070)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Community Involvement; *Educational Assessment; Educational Change; Educational Policy; *Educational Research; Educational Trends; Government Role; Home Schooling; Intermediate Grades; Junior High Schools; Middle Schools; Outcomes of Education; *Parent Participation; Parents as Teachers; Parent School Relationship; Partnerships in Education; Program Development; Program Implementation; *School Community Programs; *School Community Relationship
IDENTIFIERS	*Reform Efforts

ABSTRACT

This review of the literature on the current state of parent and community involvement looks at the programs and practices, and their effects, in the research and practice literature, especially since 1980. The review explores past history and offers a contemporary view of the policies, trends, and factors that provide an understanding for the context of parent and community involvement programs. The literature on middle grades (grades 4-8) is highlighted throughout the review, because activities in these grades are less well-developed and understood than those for earlier grades. Chapter 1 introduces the purposes, definitions, and limitations of the review. Chapter 2 examines the context of parent and community involvement programs, including the policy environment. Chapter 3 discusses the development and implementation of parent and community involvement programs, framed within the roles that parents, families, and community members assume in the educational process, and focusing on home learning, school restructuring, and districwide programs as vehicles through which these roles are facilitated. Chapter 4 explores the impact or outcomes of parent and community involvement programs for students, parents, school personnel, and districts. Chapter 5 presents implications and conclusions. Two appendixes contain 149 references and an annotated bibliography of materials on creating family-school partnerships. (HTH)

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Review

Evaluating Education Reform:

Parent and Community Involvement in the Middle Grades

PS 022350

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CREATING FAMILY/SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

A REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH AND PRACTICE LITERATURE ON PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND LITERATURE RELATED TO THE MIDDLE GRADES

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Contract No. RR-91-1720.08

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CHAPTER 1

CREATING FAMILY/SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS: INTRODUCTION

"Genuine reform," according to David Seeley (1981), author of *Education Through Partnership*, "depends on working on relationships -- with the home, community groups, politicians and business." There is a rich history of schools and the public they serve working together toward a common goal: the education of America's youth. Existing partnerships between schools and parents, families, and communities are being sustained; new and exciting partnerships are being forged throughout the nation. This review of the literature on the current state-of-the-art in parent and community involvement looks at the programs, practices, and their effects in the research and practice literature, especially since 1980.

We explore past history and offer a contemporary view of the policies, trends, and factors that provide an understanding for the context of parent and community involvement programs. The discussion of the development and implementation of programs is framed within the roles that parents, families, and community members assume in the educational process. It is here that we focus on home learning, school restructuring, and districtwide programs as vehicles through which these roles are facilitated. We survey the literature on the impacts that parent and community involvement programs claim, especially on outcomes for students, parents, teachers, and schools. Finally, conclusions are drawn from the research and practice literature, implications of the literature are discussed and recommendations for further research are made. The literature on **middle grade** (i.e, Grades 4 through 8) parent and community involvement programs and practices is highlighted throughout this review since activities in the middle grades are less well-developed and understood than those for earlier grades.

Purposes

This literature review of the current state-of-the-art serves two primary purposes:

- To assist researchers in the refinement of the plan for further research. As part of the national study on **Evaluating Education Reform: Parent and Community Involvement in Education**, this review - in combination with information gained through commissioned papers and a national conference - will provide the basis for future fieldwork.
- To inform practitioners, policymakers, and other interested parties of the current state-of-the-art in parent and community involvement programs. Where literature was available, the review focuses on those programs and practices targeted at **middle grade** populations.

Definitions

The conceptualization of parent and community involvement programs in Chapter 3 of this review involves the roles of parents, families, and community members as they are facilitated in schools and school districts. The roles of parents and families are well-established in the research and practice literature; the roles of community members in governance, as tutors, etc., are emerging as an important area for study.

In 1991 the United States Department of Education commissioned twelve studies of different aspects of national educational reform. This study focuses on parent and community involvement in middle grades education. In the original Request for Proposals from the Department three areas were indicated for concentrated study. The three areas are: 1) home learning, 2) school restructuring, and 3) districtwide programs. Typologies and frameworks are important for understanding parent and community involvement (see, for example, Epstein and Connors, 1993, and Chrispeels, 1993). These typologies and frameworks are important contributions to the conceptualization of parent and community involvement and include the roles of parents, families and community members in home learning, school restructuring, and districtwide programs. However, for this review and anticipated field research RMC Research Corporation proposes a conceptual framework that includes the three broad areas outlined in the original Request for Proposals.

To provide clarity, we define the three areas as:

- **Home learning.** Parents can extend their children's school learning through home activities such as reading with their children; assisting them with homework; encouraging family games, activities, and discussions; promoting general study, learning skills and motives, and improving their own parenting skills. Parents are assisted by the classroom teacher or other school staff through workshops, seminars and parent education courses, or more informally through suggestions from teachers for home learning activities to support the curriculum or assist with homework assignments.

- **School restructuring.** At the building level, schools may change their activities; relationships with parents, families, and community members; programs; practices and structure in significant ways to encourage more parent involvement. Examples include schools providing more time for staff to contact parents, hiring parent coordinators, adapting school meetings to parent needs and schedules, training staff to work more effectively with parents, or holding meetings in community gathering places. The emphasis is on school-initiated activities to promote contacts with all parents, to help parents learn more about their children's school programs and progress, to help them gain information on home learning activities and home supports for education, and to suggest other ways to help them help their children learn.

- **Districtwide programs.** The emphasis of comprehensive district programs is on the variety of roles for parents and community members, particularly in schools with many educationally at-risk students. It is in these districtwide programs that the roles of community members becomes most clear. These roles might include volunteering in the classrooms and schools, serving on school governance and advisory boards, participating in parent/teacher organizations, and learning how to enrich the home learning environment. Collaboration with businesses and community service agencies such as flextime for school conferences or other school-related activities may also be considered. Parents and community members are offered a variety of options for involvement from which to choose. Such comprehensive programs might use innovative methods of communicating with parents on various educational and child development issues; on recruiting and using volunteers in new, meaningful ways; and other ways to make the programs attractive to different kinds of parents and community members.

Criteria for Selection and Inclusion

There is an extensive body of literature on parent and community involvement. A determination of the sources to be selected and included was made according to the following criteria:

- **Timeliness.** Primarily, research and materials related to practice included in this review have been conducted or developed after 1980. Some research that was conducted or materials that were developed prior to 1980 have been included if they were used as a foundation for later research or program development. It is worth noting that much research was done prior to 1980; the research climate, especially regarding funding for research, was more favorable during the 1970s.

- **Grade level appropriateness.** Every attempt was made to include literature and research on **middle grade** parent and community involvement programs. However, research and materials included in this review focus, primarily, on parent and community involvement programs **across all grade levels.** Items from other grades were included to provide an indication of the rich sources of information on parent and community involvement programs, and to illustrate the need for further research in the middle grades.

- **Focus on the roles of parents, families, and community members as facilitated in the areas of home learning, school restructuring, or districtwide programs.** The items included in this review focused primarily on one or more of the three topic areas mentioned above. Other items were included if they addressed the overall context of parent and community involvement in grades four through eight or if they laid the foundation for further research or material development in any of the three topic areas.

Limitations of the Review

This review of the literature is limited by the following factors:

- **Conceptualization.** There appears to be no uniform conceptualization of parent and community involvement evident in the literature. Neither researchers nor practitioners agree on common definitions.

- **Structure of schools.** Schools are rarely organized around middle grades, i.e., Grades 4 through 8. It is often difficult to separate those aspects pertaining to the middle grades from studies that include the early elementary grades (K-3) and/or secondary school grades (9-12).

- **Overlap.** In our review of research and practices in the schools, we found considerable overlap among these topics. For example, a home learning initiative may be part of an overall effort to restructure the schools to facilitate parent involvement. As part of this restructuring effort, the school and/or district may be fostering new roles for parents and community members in the schools. When appropriate, we have indicated where issues under one topic are related to the other two.

- **Research base.** Although parent and community involvement literature is extensive it contains little research regarding the effects of parent and community involvement on student, parent, teacher, administrator, or other program outcomes. The one area where there is substantial research linking achievement outcomes with parent involvement is home learning. However, most studies that are available are generally descriptive in nature, or correlational, providing no strong evidence for cause-effect relationships.

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Guiding Questions

The conceptual framework proposed for this study, and guidelines in the Request For Proposals indicated three areas of interest: the context of parent and community involvement programs; the roles that parents, families, and community members assume in the education of their children; and the effects of promising programs on parents, students, school staff, schools and school districts. From these areas of interest corresponding questions, and subquestions of each, guided the review of the literature:

- What are the contexts within which parent and community involvement programs operate?
    How do these contextual factors influence those programs?
- What are the roles that parents, families, and community members assume in the education of their children?
    How are these roles facilitated?
    What key elements are specific to these areas?
    What key elements cut across all areas?
    What key resources are needed to design, develop, implement, and sustain these roles?
- What are the effects of promising programs on parents, students, school staff, schools, and/or school districts?
    How are these effects assessed or determined?

Overview of the Chapters

Chapters 2 through 4 contain a detailed discussion of parent and community involvement programs and practices. Chapter 5 draws conclusions, discusses implications, and recommends future research direction. The chapters parallel the guiding questions discussed above. The content of the chapters is described below:

- **Chapter 2:** The context within which parent and community involvement programs operate is discussed. The policy environment, factors that influence programs generally, and factors that are specific to middle grade programs are examined.
- **Chapter 3:** The roles of parents as: a primary resource in their children's education; parents as supporters and advocates for the education of their children in local programs; and parents as participants in the education of all children, are discussed. How these roles are facilitated through home learning, school restructuring, and districtwide programs is

reviewed; the key elements specific to each area, and key elements that cut across all areas are explored.

- **Chapter 4:** The effects of parent and community involvement programs on outcomes for students, parents, school personnel, and schools and school districts are summarized.

- **Chapter 5:** Conclusions are drawn from the research and practice literature. Implications for schools and parents are discussed. Future directions for research are recommended.

CHAPTER 2

CREATING PARTNERSHIPS: THE CONTEXT OF PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS

OVERVIEW

Context takes into account the conditions within which programs operate. Parent and community involvement programs operate in rich contextual environments: the environment of schools and school districts. The formulation and implementation of any policies and programs related to parent and community involvement will affect and be affected by forces external to any program. In identifying the set of actors and circumstances that are crucial for the development and implementation of parent and community involvement programs, it is helpful to distinguish between the larger environment and the more immediate environmental conditions. By the larger environment, we mean those historical, sociocultural, and political conditions that may have an indirect impact on the connections between the schools, parents, and the larger community. In contrast, the immediate environment includes the key players, issues, and conditions specific to classroom, the school building, and the school district. These elements have an immediate and/or direct influence on parent and community involvement in the schools. From the literature we see that these contextual factors serve to define the need to develop and sustain relationships between the home, school, and community while simultaneously serving as deterrents to any progress toward enhanced relationships.

Historically, it has been evident that local, state, and federal policies have either facilitated or inhibited the development and implementation of parent and community involvement programs. Four levels of policy are important to this discussion:

- **School policies** exist in two forms: as "stand-alone" documents, e.g., policies that address homework, or policies that are subsumed under a larger district policy framework.

- **District policies** designed to involve parents and communities in schooling are beginning to surface in light of state and federal initiatives.

- **State policies** reflect the urgency to use the resources of home and community to ensure student success. Forty-seven of fifty states responded to a survey about parent involvement policies and guidelines; over half had either policies or guidelines.

- **Federal policies** in education have a long and varied history. Parent involvement policies under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) were designed in response to social changes of the 1960s. Although these policies have changed through several reauthorizations, they nevertheless provide a template for other efforts that are intended to guarantee the involvement of parents in schooling.

A number of other trends and factors have been identified as either positively or negatively influencing parent and community involvement efforts, ***regardless of the organizational structure of the school***:

- **Diversity within systems.** As families, communities, cultural and economic systems change, so do the roles and responses of parents, schools, and communities. A systems perspective provides a framework for understanding these changes.

- **Perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs.** It is a commonly held belief that parents, communities, and schools work toward a common goal - producing successful students. Research indicates that perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs differ dramatically among the constituents of schooling.

The literature reveals at least three factors ***directly affecting middle grade*** parent and community involvement:

- **Institutional settings.** Logistics, location, curriculum, and school size affect parent and community involvement at the middle grades. These institutional settings provide little encouragement, and are more often frightening, to parents.

- **Pre-adolescent/adolescent development.** The developmental stages of pre-adolescence and adolescence present particular challenges for parents, schools, and communities.

- **Expectations, attitudes, and beliefs.** What teachers and schools expect of middle grade students and parents changes as children mature and move into different academic settings. These expectations are often misperceived by both children and their parents.

An historical and contemporary view of the policies, trends, and factors that provides an understanding of the context of parent and community involvement is discussed in detail in the remainder of this chapter.

THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT

Historical influences provide an insight into the role of schools, and local, state, and federal agencies in the development of policies concerning parent and community involvement. The designers of the Constitution felt strongly that education should not be the domain of the federal government, and ultimately gave the right and responsibility for educating the nation's youth to the states. Snider's (1990a) historical review of the role of parents and community in school decision making portrays a long, and often embittered, struggle between politicians, practitioners, and parents/communities. Attempts to consolidate control over schools in the mid-1800s and a rising dissatisfaction in the 1960s with the quality of education in some of the nation's largest urban areas, often referred to as the "community-control movement," were two notable areas for disagreement.

Four contemporary policy levels are explored: school, district, state, and federal. This exploration lends understanding to the ways policy may facilitate and/or inhibit the involvement of parents and communities in educational processes, programs, and practices.

Generally, policies are not written explicitly for middle grades. Literature supporting the influences of policy on parent and community involvement in the middle grades is noted.

School Policies

Current school level policies and expectations tend to center on what parents can provide for **teachers and schools** rather than what teachers and schools can provide for **parents**. Studies of 171 teachers from Chapter 1 elementary and middle schools in Baltimore, for example, showed that teachers expect parents to fulfill a range of different responsibilities including teaching their children appropriate behaviors, knowing what children are supposed to learn at any given grade, and helping them with their homework. Few teachers could point to comprehensive programs in their classes or schools to help parents attain these skills (Dauber and Epstein, 1991).

There is evidence that policies and resource constraints in the schools themselves may inhibit parent involvement. For example, in the absence of a homework policy or failure by teachers to adhere a homework policy consistently, parent involvement in home learning may be hindered. Conflicting expectations for the student may surface between parents and teachers. A similar problem occurs if there are a lack of materials or other resources for teachers to use to design or implement the home learning activities (Chrispeels, 1991b). Schools need to implement home learning policies that provide sufficient resources - funds, time, staff, and training - to enable teachers to be more effective in this area (Zeldin, 1989; Chrispeels, 1991a; Dauber and Epstein, 1991; McLaughlin and Shields, 1987).

District Policies

District level policy initiatives mirror federal and state initiatives. Chavkin and Williams (1987) surveyed educators, school board members, and parents in five southwestern states and found that parent involvement policies at the district level were virtually non-existent as of 1983. This condition existed in spite of the fact that educators and parents desired more school policies about parent involvement. Since that time, examples of successful district initiatives are beginning to surface.

In 1988 San Diego City Schools adopted a district parent involvement policy that closely paralleled the state policy. The policy addresses the roles of parents, communication, strategies and structures for effective parent involvement, supports for both teachers and parents, and the use of schools to connect families and students with community resources (Chrispeels, 1991b).

Indianapolis Public Schools view parent involvement "as an important component of the district's school improvement plan" (Warner, 1991:373). The Parents in Touch program, the umbrella program for all parent involvement activities, emphasizes two-way communication on matters related to student success. Epstein's (1987a) model for comprehensive parent involvement includes: developing parenting skills, communication, the use of parent volunteers, home learning, and parental participation in decision making across the district. Using a wide variety of communication strategies, this model is operationalized in the Indianapolis schools.

State Policies

The development of policy by state education agencies ". . . stems from the acknowledgement that schools alone cannot ensure that all students are successful and the additional resources of home and the community must also be brought to bear on the task at hand" (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1991). Additionally, parent and community involvement policy may serve to provide state education administrators with evaluation information on educational practices (Nardine, Chapman, and Moles, 1989).

Nardine and Morris (1991) surveyed state legislation and guidelines concerning parent involvement and found that 20 states had enacted parent involvement legislation, six states had written guidelines, and 21 states had neither legislation nor written guidelines governing parent involvement. The authors reported that legislation on parent involvement was not a high priority and that a wide diversity exists from state to state in the decisions about policies and guidelines.

Federal Policies

The first active intervention in parent involvement by the federal government came with the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 1965. Title I of the ESEA was created as much to empower poor communities to solve their own problems as to provide funding for the education of disadvantaged children (Snider, 1990b). Legislative requirements for the establishment of parent advisory councils at the district and local levels were enacted by 1978. With the 1981 reauthorization of Title I as Chapter 1 of the Educational Consolidation and Improvement Act, parent advisory councils were no longer required and parents and community members were given minimal responsibility as "advisors" to Chapter 1 programs. Without federal regulation of parent involvement, most state and local education agencies chose to give little more than lip service to parent and community participation in schooling (Nardine and Morris, 1991).

The 1988 reauthorization of Chapter 1 included the Hawkins-Stafford Amendments to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Federal requirements concerning parent involvement were reinstated not in the form of parent advisory councils, but in the development of parent involvement policies. Parents and community members now have a role in developing policies and local educators can best decide how to use these resources in designing and implementing Chapter 1 programs.

Henderson and Marburger (1990) describe six federal educational programs, in addition to Chapter 1 legislation, that include policies pertaining to parent involvement: the Bilingual Education Act (Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended); the Education of the Handicapped Act, P.L. 94-142 (1974); the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA, 1974); Even Start (Part B of the Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments of 1988); Head Start (1965); and FIRST (Fund for the Improvement and Reform of Schools and Teaching, authorized in the Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments of 1988). Each of these programs target parent involvement as a necessary component for successful educational outcomes.

This review of the literature reveals the belief that school, district, state, and federal policies concerning parent involvement should exist, and researchers and policymakers argue that policy plays a critical role in parent involvement and should be a priority for policymakers (see, for example, Davies, 1987; and McLaughlin and Shields, 1986, 1987). Heath and McLaughlin (1987) suggest that a single policy solution is ineffective and call for the development of a national child resource policy. Oakes and Lipton (1990) believe that public commitment to education can be mobilized through the key role that policymakers can play.

Policies are not developed and implemented in the absence of other contextual elements. Various trends and factors may exert influence on the development and implementation of programs and their effects may be as powerful as the effects of the policy itself. The next section looks at trends and factors which influence, both positively and negatively, parent and community involvement in schooling.

TRENDS AND FACTORS INFLUENCING PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS

Parent and community involvement programs are influenced, both positively and negatively, by trends and factors that define the immediate context for those programs. These trends and factors have a more direct, and often more immediate, impact on students, parents, school personnel and the larger community within which they operate.

First we focus on the trends and factors that impact parent and community involvement programs ***regardless of the organizational structure of the school.*** Next we look at the trends and factors that have a direct impact on parent and community involvement ***at the middle grades.***

Diversity Within Systems

Parent and community involvement programs operate within complex sociocultural systems that the define the more immediate environmental context. The diversity and interconnectedness of those systems makes the tasks of addressing the individual needs of the client populations of schools increasingly difficult.

The focus of this section of the review is on the diversity of three systems that influence parent and community involvement in schools: families, communities, and economies. Although we attempt to delineate the relationships between trends and factors of each of these system and their influence on programs, it is important to note that systems do not function in isolation. Changes in one system cause changes in other systems. An holistic approach to systems provides insight into ways schools can be restructured to facilitate parent and community involvement.

Families. In a seminal article on family diversity and school policy, Lindner (1987) analyzes three myths about families: the myth of the monolithic family form, the myth of the independent family, and the myth of parental determinism.

The monolithic family - the model of a "typical American family" with a working father, homemaker mother, and progeny solely from that relationship - does not exist. Instead, a myriad of family forms exist: single parents, blended families, dual career families, extended families and so on. In fact, a diversity of family forms has existed throughout American history.

Families, once considered to be independent both economically and educationally, are now expected to meet the challenges of fulfilling emotional needs, coordinating with outside agencies, and meeting the increasing demands of parenting. These challenges have lead to a dependence on experts outside the home. Kenniston (in Lindner, 1987:9) states:

> ... parents today have a demanding new role choosing, meeting, talking with and coordinating the experts, the technology and the institutions that help bring up their children...No longer able to do it all themselves, parents are in some ways like the executives in a large firm - responsible for the smooth coordination of the many people and processes that must work together to produce the final product...

Early family experience is a critical factor in a child's life. It is unclear, however, just how critical these family experiences are. How much of a child's life experiences are determined by parents, or how much the child determines life experiences of the parents is vague.

"Encouraging the belief that children know nothing about the world except what the parents teach" (Lindner, 1987:10), coupled with the myth of family independence often leads to a parent-blame approach. This is an underlying tension which exists throughout much of the literature on parent and community involvement - "the perception that those needing help are inadequate, rather than the system" (Lindner, 1987:10). The solution to this willingness to blame parents is to "...look instead to the broader economic and social forces that shape the experience of children and parents" (Kenniston, in Lindner, 1987:10). In short, changes within social and economic systems have a great impact on families: an impact which may be difficult to overcome.

Communities. Diversity within communities reflects the diversity of the families that comprise them. Prior to the twentieth century, much of the population was concentrated in rural, agrarian sections of the United States. With the onset of the industrial revolution, and the prospects of a "better life," large numbers of people migrated to these industrial centers. The early 1900s also brought immigrants from many nations to the United States. America became the "cultural melting pot."

Contemporary communities are difficult to characterize because of their diversity: there are large communities and small communities; there are communities that are culturally diverse and there are communities that are populated by persons of one culture; there are urban, suburban and rural communities. Examples of population demographics illustrating the diversity in communities abound.

The age of the population is shifting. As a whole, the population of the U.S. is aging, but the "baby boom echo" has now reached the middle grades. As students get older, parent involvement tends to decrease. While there are still parents involved in the schooling of younger children, there are greater percentages of people who have no direct relationships with schools.

The elderly are also far less likely to support financial investment in educational institutions. Take, for example, Sun City, a suburb of Phoenix, Arizona. Sun City is a covenant-controlled community; residents can be no younger than 55 years old. The residents of Sun City recently voted to rescind all property taxes supporting schools. Residents reasoned that they had raised their children, paid their taxes, and were no longer obligated to support education in their community. There are far-reaching consequences for such actions by older citizens in communities.

The number of citizens in the United States whose first language is not English is increasing. Educating non-English speakers presents particular challenges for parents, for teachers, and for schools and the community. In a review of the literature regarding limited English speaking populations, Bliss (1986) suggested several ways to enhance the involvement of these parents. These suggestions included:

- schools need to have more realistic expectations of parent capabilities;

- children in these families generally adapt more quickly to the language and culture than do their parents;

- there is a need to focus energy and programs at the middle school and junior high levels; and

- those professionals who deal with LEP students and parents must understand that those children with the greatest needs often do not have a parent available to become involved.

Cultural heritage, important to every citizen, is often overlooked in contemporary education. American Indian parents, educators, tribal leaders, and students present a clear message that they want: 1) direct control over the educational institutions educating their children, 2) implementation of a curriculum that takes their culture into account, and 3) development of community and educational partnerships among students, parents, educators, and community members (American Indian Science and Engineering Society, 1989). They see a need for the reform of American education to better meet their needs and to empower them to assist with reform measures that genuinely take their cultural heritage into account.

Economies. The economic system may have the greatest interactive effect on other systems. A strong economic system impacts families and communities in positive ways. A weak economic system can have devastating effects on both families and the communities in which they live.

As the distribution of wealth in the U.S. has become more skewed, there are increased numbers of impoverished children, families, and communities. Poverty, once thought to be the exclusive domain of urban centers with high concentrations of low socioeconomic populations, is now affecting urban, suburban, and rural areas alike. The perceptions of parents from low socioeconomic conditions can provide valuable lessons as educators seek to involve these parents.

Brantlinger (1985b) interviewed low-income parents and found that the majority of those parents felt that schools favor students from higher income families. While these parents were clearly concerned about their children's education, they generally felt powerless to change these perceived inequities. She also reported (Brantlinger, 1985a) that these same parents believed that high income schools were educationally superior with 94% of the parents favoring attendance of their children in such schools to receive a better education and preparation for social interaction in their adult lives.

Family, community, and economic systems are highly dependent on each other for survival. The adage that "the chain is only as strong as its weakest link" is appropriate when looking holistically at these systems. In restructuring parent involvement programs, each of these systems must be taken into account.

Perceptions, Attitudes, and Beliefs

There has been growing national concern with the relationship between parents and communities and the schools. There are two assumptions that underlie this concern. The first is the belief by the constituents of schools that there is a common goal: educating students to be successful socially, emotionally, and academically. The second assumption is that either parents or schools have somehow failed in reaching that common goal. The literature reveals that the perceptions of parents and school personnel concerning the purposes, goals, and outcomes of schooling may differ dramatically. Parent and community involvement programs, most often developed and implemented by educators, must take these perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs into account.

There is generally a strong interest on the part of parents, teachers, and administrators for developing more home-school collaborations than what currently exists in actual practice at the local school level (Moles, 1987; Williams, 1984; Herman and Yeh, 1983). One of the major difficulties, however, is the differing perceptions as to how to go about involving parents. Chavkin and Williams, (1987) conducted surveys with elementary administrators and parents in five southwestern states. Both groups were asked about their attitudes and their school's policies and practices regarding parent involvement. The authors suggested that administrators need to envision a broader role for parent involvement and capitalize on parents as an educational resource. Parents, in turn, must capitalize on using administrators as an access point for further parent involvement. However, these parent/administrator partnerships do not automatically reduce the differences in values or the resultant tensions that may exist between the two groups.

The Parent Involvement Education Project (Williams, 1984) surveyed parents, teachers, principals and other school professionals on five aspects of parent involvement: 1) attitudes; 2) decisions; 3) roles; 4) activities; and 5) teacher training. The results of the study showed a high degree of interest in home-school partnerships but suggest that parent interests extend beyond the involvement that has been typically sanctioned by schools. These and other studies suggest that educators typically do not welcome parent involvement in advisory or governance roles while parents indicate a strong interest in these activities (Williams and Stallworth, 1983; Ahlenius, 1983).

In general, when teachers and their students differ culturally or educationally or when teachers instruct large numbers of students, teachers are much less likely to know their students' parents, more likely to assume that these parents are disinterested, and much less likely to make efforts to involve the parents in learning activities (see review in Dauber and Epstein, 1991). The resulting pattern of interaction may give rise to parents and school personnel viewing each other with mutual mistrust and misunderstanding.

Some of the misperceptions stem from the attitudes and beliefs that teachers hold about the willingness of certain types of parents to help their children academically. One recurring theme in several studies and commentaries is that less educated, low income, single or dual career parents and families can not or do not want to become involved in the schools or in their children's education (Baker and Stephenson, 1986; Davies, 1987; Epstein and Dauber, 1989b; Lareau, 1987). Contributing to this is the fact that many teachers have been found to have a conventional middle class model of what constitutes a "good" family and a view that low income families are in some way deficient (Davies, 1988).

The reputed disinterest of low income and less educated families has been refuted by many researchers who have found that, in general, these parents do wish to become involved, but often lack the information needed to do so (Epstein and Becker, 1982; Clark, 1983; McLaughlin and Shields, 1987; Davies, 1988; Dauber and Epstein, 1991; Epstein, 1984a; 1986b; 1991a). In fact, Lightfoot (1975) found that not only do low income parents value education, but they view schooling as an avenue for economic and social success. Studies have also shown that single parents and dual career family members are also quite willing to help, even though they come to fewer school functions (Metropolitan Life Survey, 1987; Epstein, 1984a).

Diversity within family, community, and economic systems; and the perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs of the constituents of schooling have direct effects on parent and community involvement programs regardless of the organizational structure of the school. There are also factors that influence the development of programs specifically ***at the middle grades***. The next section of the review explores these factors.

Institutional Settings

The New York State School Board Association (1987) has identified four factors that inhibit parent involvement at the middle grades:

- **Logistics** – Departmentalization is often intimidating to parents. While their children had only one teacher in the elementary school, they have several teachers in middle schools.
- **Location** – The location of the school may present problems with transportation, or the school may be located in neighborhoods which are unfamiliar, unsafe, and/or frightening.
- **Curriculum** – If parents are expected to serve as primary reinforcers of what children are learning at school, then it is critical that they understand the subjects their children are exposed to on a daily basis. Some parents lack the skills necessary to provide homework assistance, nor are capable of serving as tutors.

- **School Size** – Secondary schools are constructed to house many more students than elementary schools. Parents may become confused, both mentally and physically, when confronted with a larger, unfamiliar building.

Recognizing that such barriers exist, the Committee for Economic Development, Research and Policy (1987) strongly states, "We urge that these (junior high and middle) schools become the subject of new and comprehensive research and scrutiny. If not, it is doubtful that successful reform can be implemented."

Middle and junior high schools in particular present difficult challenges to involving parents in learning activities because they typically have a different structure than elementary schools. They are generally larger and more impersonal, with each student having as many as six teachers and each teacher instructing as many as 150 students a day.

Researchers have found some differences in parent involvement programs for children in middle grades according to type of classroom organization and academic subject. Epstein and Dauber (1989b), for example, found that teachers in self-contained classrooms are more likely to involve parents than teachers in teamed or departmentalized programs. Teachers of reading or English are also more likely to engage parents in home learning activities. Becker and Epstein (1982a) found that elementary school teachers who frequently involve parents in home learning activities are most likely to request parental assistance in reading or activities related to reading. Further, Dauber and Epstein (1991) reported that parents of sixth and seventh grade students are more likely to be involved with their children's education at home whereas parents of eighth grade students are more involved at the school building level.

Pre-Adolescent/Adolescent Development

Added to a sometimes confusing array of teachers and subject areas are the changing character and needs of children. Between the ages of 10 to 13, children change physically, mentally, and socially. They strive for more independence from their families at the same time that they require more support and reassurance (Berla, 1991; Turning Points, 1992). In addition, children of these ages increase their abilities to take on more responsibilities; gain greater understanding of abstractions and of themselves and others; build their memory, academic, and social skills; and add to their abilities to resolve conflicts (Epstein, 1987b; Ruble, 1980; Simmons, et al., 1979; Stipek, 1984).

While students are going through many biological changes, their adolescence is defined through their culture. Since the United States is a pluralist culture, there is a wide variety of ways that individuals experience adolescence (Atwater, 1983). In some cases, parents may exert too much pressure for intellectual achievement. Such children, called "hurried children" by David Elkind (1979), may suffer anxiety, especially if they perceive that parental affection and/or financial support are contingent on achievement. An implicit achievement-support contract can either push a student to excel or produce resentment, escapism or acting out during the adolescent years.

Expectations, Attitudes, and Beliefs

Expectations of teachers and the socialization of students are also found to conflict, especially during the middle grade years. Black students, for example, who are socialized to demonstrate an overt sense of self-esteem and/or a relatively aggressive posture toward problem solving (Holliday, 1985; Bowman and Howard, 1985) are sometimes characterized as poor students when they are simply behaving according to subcultural norms (Zeldin, 1989). The opposite problem can arise for children particularly from lower income strata who have been taught to conform to authority. Helton and Oakland (1977) have shown that teachers view these children as less intelligent, and give the highest ratings of intelligence to boys who are perceived as nonconforming and independent. When the cultural expectations and beliefs of the school conflict with those of low income families, Black families, or families from linguistically diverse backgrounds, the child is not provided with the "maximum support for educational achievement that could be offered by home and school partnerships" (Zeldin, 1989:27).

The relationship between parents and their children also changes as the children mature, as does parents' confidence in their own skills and knowledge (Maccoby, 1984; Sigel, et al., 1984). While parents generally gain confidence in their abilities to guide and interact with their children, they lose confidence in their ability to help their children with their school work (Epstein, 1986a).

Teachers of middle grade students also increase their expectations for student achievement. Children are expected to consolidate previous learning, use their developing analytic abilities and read to learn. Greater expectations for conduct are also imposed. All of this is complicated by the fact that as students enter middle school or junior high school, report card grades tend to decline even as overall competence increases (Peterson, 1986). This occurs because middle school students are being compared with a new, larger group of students who also did well in elementary school and because the students are presented with more demanding tasks and more competition for grades (Epstein, 1987b).

Differences in academic expectations and classroom organization between the middle grades and the elementary grades caused some students and their families to misperceive their relationship when it came to schooling (Epstein, et al., 1990). Some children, for example, believed that their teachers did not want them to discuss or solicit help from their parents on their schoolwork. Many felt that all homework was designed to be done alone. Some parents may think that they should not try to help their children if they are not "experts" at the particular academic subject matter.

A study of inner city elementary and middle schools by Dauber and Epstein (1991) showed that the parent involvement programs in elementary schools are stronger, more positive and more comprehensive than those for children in the middle grades. This is evident for a number of types of parent involvement, including learning activities. Useem (1990) found a similar pattern; parents of children in the middle grades received less information and guidance precisely at a time when they needed more in order to understand the larger and more complex schools, subjects, and schedules.

Low-income Black parents from two junior high schools in Washington, D.C. identified economic and educational differences between themselves and their children's teachers as barriers to home-school collaboration (Leitch and Tangri, 1988). While low socioeconomic status Black families often lack both human and material resources, their participation in their children's education enhances educational achievement (Slaughter and Epps, 1987).

Summary

Parent and community involvement is influenced by a variety of contextual factors. The school, district, state and federal policy environments contribute both to the perception of the importance of parent and community involvement and to the way schools or districts define what the various roles and relationships should be. In the past, the policies that existed were primarily implicit and concentrated on what parents could do in the home to support the academic goals of the school. More recently policies on every level have become more explicit and have recognized the role of parents and community members as partners and decisionmakers.

The diversity within families, communities, cultures and economies, however, make uniform conceptualization of a school/parent/ community partnership difficult. With no "typical" family structure, no "typical" family culture and values, and no "typical" economic status, it is difficult for schools or district to define realistic expectations for home learning, parent and community support, or even constellations of activities that will meet the needs and fall within the abilities of both partners. given the inherent interdependence of such systems, however, the partners must find a way to accommodate both universal and local concerns.

Added to this challenge are the differing perceptions on the part of each group regarding the definition of appropriate roles and relationships. While school personnel and parents agree, for example, that more involvement is desirable, they do not agree on the role of parents in governance or on the degree to which parents are motivated and/or willing to help their children at home. In some cases, these disparate views are compounded by the differences in socioeconomic characteristics of school staff and families.

Factors within the school setting itself may also serve to inhibit involvement and skew perceptions. Schools that are departmentalized or are very large, that are located in areas that are not easily accessible or perceived to be unsafe, or that are confusing in their physical layout may by their nature, discourage parents from coming onsite. Curriculum that surpasses the skills that parents have also discourages involvement.

Finally, the students themselves influence the nature and scope of the family/school partnership. During the middle grade years, the children change physically, mentally and socially. They tend to seek more independence from their families while at the same time needing more support as they face greater academic challenges. Student and teacher expectations for themselves and each other may also shift during this time.

All of these contextual variable make the definition of family/school partnership itself a complex undertaking. Examples of school, district, state and federal roles in forging a positive relationship within this context will be addressed in the next chapters.

CHAPTER 3

CREATING PARTNERSHIPS: THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS

OVERVIEW

The development and implementation of parent and community involvement programs encompasses activities and programs that promote strong partnerships between schools and the clients they serve - students, parents, families, and the larger community. It is expected that educational outcomes may be strengthened through these partnerships. Although these partnerships may assume various configurations, there are three critical roles that parents and community members may take in the education of their children. The first role, parents as a primary resource in their children's education, is exemplified through home learning activities. In this role, parents may have the most direct effect on student achievement. The second role, parents and community members as supporters and advocates is actualized through sie-based school restructuring. The roles of parents and community are facilitated by the organizational structures of schools that have been changed to enable parents and families to better support the education of their children. Parent and community members as participants in the education of all children is the third role. This role broadens the scope of both the partnership and the effects of the partnership. Districtwide programs provide parents and community members the opportunity to be involved in a variety of decision making roles; the effects of the partnership extend to all children in the district. In addition to the roles that parents and community members assume in the partnerships that are formed, we review program elements and strategies that effect roles in specific ways and other program elements that cut across all roles in the development and implementation process.

A synthesis of the literature reveals three critical roles that parents and community members can play in the partnerships that are created in the development and implementation of parent and community involvement programs. Each of these roles is actualized in very different ways in relationships in classrooms, schools, and school districts:

- **Parents as the primary resource the education of their children** is best exemplified in **home learning**. Home learning is the activity, or set of activities, that parents and family members may engage in to help their children succeed academically. This partnership role between parents and/or family members and schools may have the greatest impact on achievement.

- **Parents and community members as supporters and advocates for the education of their children** is facilitated through **site-based school restructuring.** Restructuring schools to create parent and community partnerships with schools focuses on organizational structure. Changing activities; creating new relationships between parents, families, communities, and schools; and implementing innovative strategies are ways that schools can restructure to facilitate parent and community involvement in this role.

- **Parents and community members as participants in the education of all children** incorporates a broader vision in the partnership between schools and the populations they serve. **Districtwide programs** provide the vehicle for parents and community members to be involved in roles that reach beyond the immediate impact of an individual child to the impact on all children in the district.

There are key program elements and strategies that are specific to those programs that are designed and implemented to enhance the partnership roles of parents, families, communities, and schools. Successful parent and community involvement initiatives consider these program elements and strategies in design, development, and implementation.

- The key program elements specific to **home learning** are: well-developed local practices; a willingness of teachers to build on parent strengths; ongoing recruitment using multiple methods; effective strategies that promote home learning; and the home learning environment.

- **School restructuring** activities focus on the following key program elements: an emphasis on quality education; family participation; and site-based management.

- Development and implementation of policy; embracing the diversity of families and communities; and a focus on the linkages with the community and other agencies supporting education are key program elements in **districtwide programs** that seek to broaden the scope of the partnerships between schools and parents, families, and community members.

Several key program elements cut across all of the partnership roles and are critical factors in parent and community involvement programs **at all levels of the education system**. The literature reveals that successful programs give consideration to these elements as programs are designed and implemented:

- **Communication** is a primary building block in creating partnerships between parents, families, community members and schools as programs are developed and implemented. Communication takes into account the equal participation by the partners in those relationships.

- **Key players** including students, parents, families, and community members are the primary focus in the development and implementation of parent and community involvement programs. Other key players may be teachers, counselors, site-based administrators, central administrators, and personnel from business and social agencies interested in the education of children.

- **Resources** are essential in the development and implementation of parent and community involvement programs. Funding, personnel, training, and coordination of effort are needed if these programs are to succeed.

The roles of parents, families, and communities and the partnerships that are created with schools speak to programs that are designed, developed, and implemented **at any grade level**. Where research literature on **middle grade** parent and community involvement roles and programs was found, it will be highlighted to avoid confusion for the reader. The synthesis that follows describes in detail the roles of parents as they are embedded within home learning, school restructuring, and district-wide programs; key elements that cut across all parent and community involvement programs; and elements and strategies specific to programs.

THE ROLES OF PARENTS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAMS

Parents, families, and community members can assume a variety of roles in developing and implementing partnerships and programs. They may serve as primary resources for children in providing achievement-related activities in the home or community to reinforce or extend the learning that takes place in school. They may serve as advocates for their children in the school setting by restructuring the relationship they have with the school to emphasize new roles, activities, or strategies to enhance partnerships. Finally, they may participate in the formulation of policies that affect all children. In this section, key elements of each of these roles will be discussed, along with those constructs, such as communication, key players and resources, that cut across all roles.

Parents as a Primary Resource in the Education of their Children

As noted in the previous chapter, parents serve as a primary resource in the education of their children. They establish a learning environment, complete with a set of normative expectations understood by their children. The research literature on enhancing parental roles in this regard generally focuses on how parents can help their children through home learning activities and the ways in which such activities can be optimized.

Home learning

The involvement of parents in learning activities with their children at home has been characterized as the "meat and potatoes" of parent involvement (Rich, 1987a). It is the parents who provide the building blocks that make learning in school possible (Epstein, 1991b). Any time a student expends on academic activities in the home, increases the total amount of the learning time (Walberg, 1984). Involving parents in home learning activities thus vastly improves students' productivity. Programs and activities that may be called "home learning" take many forms, but most commonly include homework, leisure reading, family discussions, educational games, and enrichment activities (Moles, 1991).

Key Element: Well-developed local practices. Dauber and Epstein (1991:11) asserted that "regardless of parent education, family size, student ability, or school level (elementary or middle school), parents are more likely to become partners in their children's education if they perceive that the schools have strong practices to involve parents at school, at home on homework, and at home on reading activities." Zeldin (1989) found that districts and schools play a key role in developing effective school-parent partnerships to encourage home learning. Birman (1987), for example, showed that local factors rather than federal requirements determined the success of Chapter 1 parent involvement programs. Hamilton and Cochran (1988), Comer (1988b), and others have shown that school policy revisions to promote home learning activities can be effective.

The most successful schools design home learning programs to fit the needs and expectations of families who intend to participate (Zeldin, 1989; Epstein, 1989). Planners can assess these needs in advance and work to design strategies that are suitable to the particular population (Rich, 1985; Epstein, 1989; Slaughter and Epps, 1987). Some researchers found that this worked best when parents are involved in planning the program (Chrispeels, 1991a). In addition, teachers or other service providers who received training in the best ways to work with families are more successful (Zeldin, 1989; Chrispeels, 1991a; Dauber and Epstein, 1991).

Epstein (1991a) has concluded that for teachers, parent involvement in students' home learning is largely an organizational problem. To manage parental assistance, "Teachers must have clear, easy, and reliable ways to (a) distribute learning activities to be completed at home, (b) receive and process messages from parents about the activities, (c) evaluate the help students obtain at home, and (d) continue to manage and evaluate the parent involvement practices" (Epstein, 1991a:4).

Key Element: A willingness of teachers to build on parent strengths. One primary theme found throughout the research studies is that effective programs respect and utilize the strengths of all parents, regardless of parental income, education, or social status (Zeldin, 1989). Further, successful programs view even minor involvement as the basis for later, more active involvement (Eastman, 1988). Parent strengths such as their interest in their own child's education, interest in working with the schools, and informal literacy activities in the home, are a focal point for building a strong partnership between teachers and parents.

Research from the Johns Hopkins Surveys of Schools and Family Connections (Epstein and Becker, 1987) showed that teachers believe that parents' help is necessary if schools are to solve problems. About two-thirds of the teachers in these surveys frequently asked parents to engage in reading activities with their children at home. Teachers mainly requested that parents help their children with activities in reading and language arts (Epstein, 1991a). Requests usually took the form of asking parents to review or practice activities that were taught in class. Home learning activities were most likely to be promoted by teachers of younger students, those with advanced training, those who utilized some parent volunteers in their classrooms, and those who conducted at least three workshops for parents during the school year.

Some researchers have focused on how to increase teachers' understandings of the literacy practices that go on in any home (Brice-Heath, 1983; Cochran, 1987; Slaughter, 1988). This understanding has been shown to enhance teachers' effectiveness since they could use instructional styles consistent with those used in the home and they could write summaries so that parents could learn from other families. The use of differential strategies for various cultural groups, however, has been challenged by some researchers who question whether such treatment is helpful individualization or detrimental bias (Cazden, 1986).

Key Element: Ongoing recruitment using multiple methods. Researchers found that specific recruitment practices to engage parents in home learning activities are a vital part of successful programs, especially for parents who are considered "hard to reach". The use of printed brochures and other school-generated print materials sent home with students are effective strategies for reaching middle class parents; however, they are not helpful in recruiting "at risk" parents (Pickarts and Fargo, 1975; McLaughlin and Shields, 1987). Instead, schools need to utilize alternative strategies such as home visits, employing parent liaisons, the use of the media and word-of-mouth to advertise efforts, and referrals of families by community agencies (Zeldin, 1989).

Rich (1985) offered several suggestions for convincing parents to become involved in home learning activities based on her research. Schools may want to initiate a bilingual media campaign and use respected community leaders to stress the importance of parents in educating their children. The schools could establish family learning centers in schools, store fronts or churches, and bilingual hotlines to help teach parents how to help their children to learn. Staff from individual schools can create many materials and learning activities for parents to use at home.

In her evaluation of Thompson's *Family Math*, and Epstein's *Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork*, Chrispeels (1991a) found that home learning activities were most effective when parents receive individual invitations to parent education workshops; follow-up phone calls were made to parents following the announcement of a parent education workshop; the school provided translation, transportation, and child care; small grade level groups were targeted; teachers connected family learning workshops with their regular classroom curriculum and instruction; and arrangements were made to accommodate students whose families could not attend.

Key Element: Effective strategies for promoting home learning. Many researchers found that parents need specific advice and strategies to enable them to engage in home learning activities. Rich (1986a), for example, showed that successful home learning programs had a prescriptive component that explains the roles and responsibilities of all of those concerned and clearly specifies what activities were to take place. Others found that such programs needed to have sufficient flexibility to allow for time constraints and family initiatives (Zeldin, 1989; Barber, 1987). Personal support and one-on-one communication also were shown to enhance program effectiveness (Lightfoot, 1975; Chrispeels, 1987b).

Brown (1989) noted that teachers should not think of these activities in terms of worksheets or repetitions of what was learned in school. Parents tend to view this as "busywork". Instead, to be most beneficial, home learning activities need to be designed to be meaningful and interesting, such as on-going projects and integrated learning experiences (Brown, 1989; Epstein and Herrick, 1991).

The strongest effects on parent involvement at home and at school, according to Dauber and Epstein (1991:13) were "demonstrated by parents who personally understand and act on teacher's practices that encourage their involvement." Further, Epstein (1991a) asserted that even when parents could not help their child on a specific assignment, they could listen and ask questions about the skill or topic. "These substantive conversations can be important motivating forces for the students and can help students 'tune in' to class work" (Epstein, 1991a:5).

Key Element: The home learning environment. Several researchers pointed to the importance of the home learning environment (Clark, 1983; Walberg, 1984; Henderson, 1987; de Kanter,et al., 1986; Zeldin, 1989; Chrispeels, 1991a). Overt modeling of the importance of education and high expectations for student achievement were found to be important, as well as parents displaying an "authoritative" parenting style, interest and support for the child's schoolwork, and provision of youth enrichment activities. There are family process variables available to all parents that promote student learning. These behaviors and activities include an organized routine for the whole family; a limit to the amount of time children are allowed to watch television; reading, writing, listening, and conversing among family members; provision of a time and place for study; and books and other reading materials in the home.

Families, teachers, and schools each have a role to play. Families of middle grade students should structure household chores and other tasks that are challenging and appropriate to their children's age group and engage children in conversations about school, current events, or even television shows (Epstein, 1986b; Rich, 1985). Parents should include children in family decision making, as appropriate, and promote the development of problem solving skills. Parents can also encourage children to select friends who value school. Teachers can assist parents by providing information on learning objectives, testing and grading policies, and opportunities for remediation or enrichment. Finally, families and schools both can help students to manage time more appropriately. With adolescence, students' ability to work intensively increases. Families can adopt practices to assure that the student has the sustained time necessary to master school subjects. In general, to promote student motivation to learn, family and school structures need to be designed to support the developmental demands created by biological, cognitive, personal,and social growth of the child as he/she matures (Lipsitz, 1984).

Home learning in the middle grades. The major emphasis of activities that may be termed "home learning" in grades four through eight include helping parents:

- become partners with teachers in encouraging children with their schoolwork;
- interact with their children at home to support school goals and programs;
- understand early adolescence and middle grade programs; and
- assist children with decisions that affect their own and the families' futures (Epstein and Salinas, 1990).

Epstein and Herrick (1991) developed and evaluated a number of specific practices that teachers could use to increase parent involvement in the home. One such practice was the use of home learning packets in math and language arts which were used during the summer by parents of students who would enter grades seven and eight. The packets included a number of exercises and activities to help students review and practice useful skills. First year evaluations showed that while the packets served the function of communicating to parents and giving them specific suggestions to help their children academically, the packets needed to be reworked to fit the school curriculum more closely and to provide activities that students found more stimulating and fun. The packets were revised the second year and included activities in math, language arts, science, and health. Students were told they would be tested on the skills that were presented in the packets when they returned to school in the fall. Evaluations showed that students who worked with their parents completed a greater number of activities in the packets and that the packets had a moderate effect on student performance for some students, especially those who had marginal skills.

Parents and Community Members as Supporters and Advocates for the Education of their Children

The focus of the review in this area is on practices that are implemented at the school building level to encourage the role of parents as supporters of their children's education: to promote contacts with all parents, to help parents learn more about their children's school programs and progress, to help them gain information on home learning activities and home supports for education, and to incorporate other ways to help parents help their children learn. As with home learning, schools must assume an active role to ensure that parents have a variety of ways to become involved, as advocates within the system, in their child's school. The larger community must also be given options for involvement and schools must listen to suggestions and input from parents and community members.

Key Element: A focus on quality education for all students. The research literature for Effective Schools emphasizes the importance of developing the abilities of all children regardless of their current achievement level or their cultural, ethnic, or socioeconomic background. The concept of teaching the whole child has extended upward from the elementary level and has provided a balance to the historically heavy academic emphasis at the secondary level. The middle grade student is not just an intellect to be developed; educators must consider his or her social, emotional, and physical development as well (Davies, 1991).

This holistic and developmental approach to learning has implications for the involvement of families. Parents are hungry for information not only about how to help their children do well in school academically but how to help them with the social, emotional, and physical growth as their children face the problems of adolescence. Additionally, the changing structure of the family and its related needs must be considered in relationship to the school and its available resources (Epstein, 1988). Schools have begun to move beyond the informational phase with parents to modeling, guiding, and assisting them with becoming more effective in dealing with their children's development and learning. Thus, schools and families must work together to form high, yet realistic expectations that lead to success for all students as they restructure the school to meet their local needs (American Indian Science and Engineering Society, 1989; Bliss, 1986; Davies, 1991).

Key Element: Family participation in their children's education. Davies (1991) recommended that as we redefine parent involvement we are better served by the term 'family involvement' as we deal with the current realities of the family structure. It may be that, for some children, it is the grandparents, aunts and uncles, brothers and sisters or even neighbors who make the most significant contribution in supporting the child's educational development outside of the school.

Family settings can provide a social and behavioral backdrop that helps ensure the success of their child in the school setting. They can also provide home learning activities that accelerate the process of acquiring skills and content that lead to higher student achievement. Schools must take the lead in helping families have the knowledge and skills to provide this crucial support to their children (Bliss, 1986; Moles, 1990; Slaughter and Epps, 1987). This assistance may mean modified expectations by the school staff as well as changing school practices (Davies, 1991; Epstein, 1991b; Griswold, 1986). Teachers need training to become more effective in their communication with parents and to have specific practices to suggest to parents as they become more actively involved with their children's educational progress. Principals need to take the lead to ensure that parent and community involvement is a high priority for the school staff, parents, and the community (Purnell and Gotts, 1985).

Specific learning activities can be promoted by specific school practices. For example, completion of homework can be encouraged through providing homework hotlines, sponsoring after-school homework tutoring sessions, or assigning interactive projects that require parents to draw on their strengths or knowledge (Chrispeels, 1991a). Programs addressing homework were found to be most effective when the homework assigned was considered by parents and teachers to be clear and of an appropriate quantity (Walberg, 1984; Chrispeels, 1991a). Home learning activities designed to promote family learning (as opposed to independent practice or enrichment activities for students) were most effective when parents were given ideas and materials that fostered learning in the home, and teachers reinforced the activities by integrating the assignments into the classroom by having students share their progress in class or in school newsletters (Chrispeels, 1991a). Researchers also suggested that the school provide surrogate family members for students whose parents cannot participate (Davies, 1988).

Various practices have been implemented by schools to encourage greater parent involvement in school activities. The Quality Education Project, for example, encouraged parents to sign a pledge promising that they will help their children complete their homework; read to or with their children; provide their children with a quiet place to study; see that they get to school on time and to bed by nine o'clock; and attend conferences, open houses, and other school events. Concomitantly, teachers signed documents promising to teach concepts necessary for academic achievement, be aware of individual student needs, provide a safe environment for learning, and communicate with parents about their children's progress.

Key Element: Site-based management. Site-based management has emphasized the importance of appropriate policies and local decision making as it relates to the development of effective schools where parents are involved. In the early seventies, the changing demographics of many neighborhoods and communities across the country facilitated the site-based management process as a mean of addressing the unique needs of these changing communities. In the eighties, site-based approaches coupled with the research on Effective Schools led to pragmatic approaches to school improvement for all children. For example, the Effective Schools research highlighted the importance of involvement of the school staff and parents in the development and implementation of comprehensive school improvement plans. Without such staff and community involvement, both commitment and motivation to carry out these plans was often lacking (Taylor and Levine, 1991). This type of grass roots development of parent and community involvement is what Smith and O'Day (1990) characterize as the "second wave" of reform efforts that is bottom-up and is more effective than top-down (first wave) changes.

One of the first reports of the 1980's to argue for this grassroots strategy for school improvement was "Investing in Our Children", a report from the Economic Development Council. In a 1989-90 survey of its members, the American Association of School Administrators (1990) almost one-fourth of the respondents had implemented school-based management and another quarter were considering this bottom-up management style.

Parent Involvement in middle grade school restructuring. Berla, Henderson, and Kerewsky (1989) outlined the kinds of things that middle schools should be doing if an effective school/parent/family partnership is in place:

- A clear, welcoming parent involvement policy is published for all to see and posted in an obvious place.
- The school is organized so that at least one person knows each child well.
- The school office is friendly and open.
- The school sponsors parent-to-parent communication and events.
- A full-time parent contact person is responsible for bringing parents and school together.
- There is a parent room in the school building.
- Parents and school staff work together to determine parents' needs and provide necessary services.
- Parents whose primary language is not English are made to feel welcome at the school and a translator is provided to help them communicate.

The Teachers Involve Parents In Schoolwork (TIPS) model (Epstein, 1987b) and the New Partnerships for Student Achievement (NPSA) program (Home and School Institute, 1988; Zeldin, 1989) provide elementary and middle school teachers with structured homework assignments in reading, language arts, math, science, and the arts that parents and students work together to complete. Megaskills (Rich, 1985), on the other hand, teaches parents more generic skills to use in everyday life to help them to motivate their children to succeed in school. School and Home (Smith, in Zeldin, 1990) offers consistent learning activities for children and rewards them daily for completed homework.

Parents And Community Members as Participants in the Education of All Children

In this section, the broader roles of parents and communities in the education of all children are discussed. The focus is on districtwide programs as a vehicle for meeting both the common and diverse needs of children in the district's schools. This section addresses key elements and the types of linkages that foster positive interactions.

Districtwide Parent and Community Involvement Programs

Research on Effective Schools points to the importance of parent and community involvement in the reform/restructuring of schools. This critical relationship is often overlooked (Solomon, 1991). Parents and community members want to be heard concerning the education of their children. The 1989 Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitude Toward the Public Schools (Gallup and Elam, 1989) revealed that a majority of parents believed that they should be involved in tangible ways, e.g., in decisions on allocation of school funds and selection and hiring of school administrators, in the reform/restructuring of schools. Snider (1990c) reported on the powerful reform movement in Chicago, where parents gained a controlling majority on local school councils. Several other urban districts have explored this "Chicago-style" proposal, including Seattle, Boston, and Houston. In order to avert a teacher strike which threatened to close Denver Public Schools, Colorado Governor Roy Romer invoked a little known state statute and took control of the school district. He ordered the formation of 12-member school councils to supervise the running of the schools. Parents, community members, business leaders, and school personnel on these school councils have made decisions and changes that include: the setting of school goals and priorities, hiring and firing of administrators, and schoolwide exemptions from districtwide mandated standardized testing.

The school reform/restructuring movement has allowed parents and community members a greater share in how schooling is operationalized. With this greater share, there are also high stakes; educators must be prepared to help parent/community groups who may have the zeal to reform but lack the knowledge base to make informed decisions. Sharing the wealth of knowledge and experience about issues such as curriculum and instruction, administration, and governance can only help to forge a strong bond between schools and the parents, families, and communities that they serve.

Key Element: Development and implementation of policy. As students leave elementary schools and progress to the middle grades, it is less likely that parents will become involved in their child's education (Henderson and Marburger, 1990). Federal, state, and local policies have been written in an attempt to bridge the gap which exists between these schools and parent and community involvement. Yet, it still usually falls to teachers or schools to involve parents, families, and communities in schooling. A key to school/family/community involvement is the presence, and effective implementation of a districtwide policy.

The reform/restructuring of schools is a major undertaking and must involve parents and communities if the effort is to be successful. The need for parent/family/community partnership policies is well documented in the literature (Davies, 1987; Heath and McLaughlin, 1987; McLaughlin and Shields, 1987; National School Board Association, 1988; Williams and Chavkin, 1990). There is a strong indication that state initiatives are needed as guidance for district initiatives (Nardine and Morris, 1991; Chapman, 1991; Solomon, 1991; Council of Chief State School Officers, 1991), yet some studies indicate that the need or desire for policies does not ensure that they do, in fact, exist (Nardine and Morris, 1991; Chavkin and Williams, 1987). Rich (1985) and Oakes and Lipton (1990) posit that a single policy is no longer viable and that policymakers must consider schools and homes separately in making policy, as well as the connections between all agencies that serve children. Although a written policy may not guarantee parent involvement, McLaughlin and Shields (1987) argue that it is a necessary prerequisite.

The National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (1990) provided guidelines for policy development that includes input from teachers, administrators, parents, students, persons from youth-serving agencies, and the community. They contend that policies should contain the following concepts:

- Opportunities for all parents to become informed about how the parent involvement program will be designed and carried out.
- Participation of parents who lack literacy skills or who do not speak English.
- Regular information for parents about their child's participation and progress in specific educational programs and the objectives of those programs.
- Opportunities for parents to assist in the instructional process at school and at home.
- Professional development for teachers and staff to enhance their effectiveness with parents.
- Linkages with social service agencies and community groups to address key family and community issues.
- Involvement of parents of children at all ages and grade levels.
- Recognition of diverse family structures, circumstances and responsibilities, including differences that might impede parent participation. The person(s) responsible for a child may not be the child's biological parent(s) and policies and programs should include participation by all persons interested in the child's educational progress.

Key Element: Embracing the diversity of families in the design of programs and practices. Zeldin's (1990) review of home/school partnership programs for at-risk students revealed that those programs should be designed and implemented with consideration of the special needs and challenges of at-risk families. Modifying institutional structures, including teacher training and administrative and supervisory support, recognizing the lifestyles of diverse parents and students, and implementing effective programs, including home learning components and active support to parents were suggested as the characteristics that should be incorporated into home/school partnership programs.

Districtwide programs must consider all families, including those considered by some schools to be hard to reach (Epstein, 1991b). The parent involvement program in McAllen, Texas, is exemplary in this area (D'Angelo and Adler, 1991). The McAllen community is predominantly Hispanic and due to large numbers of families that immigrate into the community, the parents' level of English-language proficiency is minimal. District leadership has encouraged parent and community involvement not only in federally-funded Chapter 1 or bilingual programs, but also districtwide. Workshops, materials, and information are presented in both English and Spanish, and staff are either bilingual or are making efforts toward becoming bilingual.

Key element: Focus on the linkages with the community and agencies supporting education. Businesses are recognizing the importance of quality education in the communities in which they are located. Quality schools help them to attract and retain competent employees who have children attending schools. The most common form of school-business partnerships is the "helping hand relationship" where businesses help to enhance existing school programs through donations, volunteers, equipment, and minigrants. Seventeen percent of the nation's schools were involved in such business relationships in 1984 and by 1990 this type of school-business involvement had grown to forty percent. These school-business partnerships increased the quality of education through better communication, enriched curriculum and broader corporate support for education.

Volunteers from the business community working in schools to help motivate students and increase student achievement is not a new idea. The Fort Worth (Texas) Independent School District, for example, has had an active districtwide Adopt-A-School program for several years. Almost all of the district's schools have an "adopted partner." These volunteers give support to the schools in terms of additional funding, tutoring services, and special presentations. Both community/business volunteers and schools reported positive relationships had been formed through participation in the program.

Cohen (1990) reported that approximately 1,000 companies are now making efforts to help families balance responsibilities between home and work. U.S. West telecommunications, for example, has established an educational foundation for the purposes of providing parents with tools to help their children thrive academically, and strengthening home/school involvement through the workplace.

Community agencies and institutions that serve families can also be brought into this support system to nurture the development of the whole child, thus supporting his or her educational success as well (Epstein, 1991b; Griswold, 1986). The home-school connection for facilitating broader parent and community involvement requires that members of the community be involved in teaching, supporting, learning, and making decisions along with school personnel. The broader the involvement of the community, the more likely it is that schools will move toward realizing their full potential in the effort to educate all children (Chrispeels, 1991b; Henderson, 1986; Jones, 1991).

Cities-in-Schools is a long-standing effort to align human services and businesses with schools to increase student attendance and academic achievement, as well as addressing family health issues and increasing parent involvement. The program is currently operating in fourteen states, nine of which have adopted it as a statewide model. Individual schools using this model often become the site for the delivery of much broader human services such as health and child care, social services, and adult literacy and education efforts.

KEY PROGRAM ELEMENTS THAT CUT ACROSS PROGRAMS AT ALL LEVELS

Certain elements operate at all levels of the educational system. No matter what character the organization or relationship assumes, schools and districts must develop positive communication patterns with families and communities. They must recognize the value in the roles assumed by teachers, counselors, administrators, business persons, and other key players. They must access and provide sufficient resources for programs to be successful. These common elements will be addressed in the following sections.

Key Element: Communication

Healthy communication is a key attribute in any partnership. The nature, amount and mutuality of communication affects the success of any relationship between schools and homes or communities. This section reviews the role of communication in the context of home learning, restructuring and district programs and offers guidance from the research on improving communication patterns.

Communication and home learning. Several researchers have studied the need for mutuality between the home and the school to promote home learning activities. Leler (1983), for example, examined 65 studies to determine whether one- or two-way communication between the home and the school resulted in increased participation of parents. She found that the two-way communication projects all showed positive results, and that the best of all programs are the ones that have somewhat structured programs that trained parents to tutor their children. Cole and Griffin (1987) confirmed this need in their summary of evidence from a number of studies. They noted that the "school-to-home pathway . . . is more likely to be effective if the two-way nature of the path is explicitly recognized by educators" (Cole and Griffin, 1987:78).

Communication and school restructuring. The issue of communication between the home and the school is addressed repeatedly in the literature. At the building-level, parents need basic information regarding school goals, programs, and policies if they are to be effective in supporting and enhancing their children's education. Schools must listen to what parents have to say about their involvement in the schools and then develop programs to meet identified parent needs (Chrispeels, 1987a). Historically, the written word in the form of notes, calendars, newsletters, and handbooks has been the primary means of communication between the school and the home. Face-to-face communication such as home visits, parent/teacher conferences, meetings, and workshops are viewed as the most effective means of communication and these are the type of activities over which the schools have the most control. More recently, the use of radio and television, as well as audio and video tapes have been used to inform parents and community members about the school (D'Angelo and Adler, 1991). While much can be accomplished by individual schools using the media, district support is often a necessity.

Gotts and Purnell (1984) recommended that researchers link additional research to communication issues related to: 1) academics, 2) the locus of communication, 3) the intended audience, 4) school-to-home and home-to-school, 5) specific topics, and 6) methods of communication. By linking the research to these topics, better practices leading to increased school effectiveness are predicted. In a later study, the authors surveyed teachers on the topic of family-school relations and found that the teachers overwhelmingly favored parent involvement, but that they generally were not interested in training that could increase their effectiveness in communicating and working with parents.

In interviews with administrators, teachers, social agency personnel, and low income parents, in Boston, Liverpool, and several cities in Portugal, Davies (1988) found there was little contact between the schools and the parents, and that the communication that did exist was primarily negative, focusing on academic or behavioral problems of the students. Teachers and administrators tended to dwell on family problems and conditions, and generally considered the parents to be "hard to reach." They believed that the problem was the parents' apathy, i.e., that these family members did not have the time, interest, or competence to be involved. They felt that the parents did not value education. While expressing strong interest in their children's education, the parents in this study had a low assessment of their abilities to help their children. They saw themselves as being academic failures. Davies concluded that these parents were "reachable," but that schools were either not trying to reach them, insensitive, or not knowledgeable about how to overcome social class, linguistic, or cultural barriers.

Several researchers discussed the tendency for teachers to contact parents more frequently for negative messages (Chrispeels, 1987b; Lightfoot, 1975; Seginor, 1983). This activity contributes to a pattern of mistrust and misunderstanding from the points of view of parents and has resulted in some parents viewing schools as a "threatening monolith unwilling or unable to develop the strengths of the child or accurately measure achievement" (Zeldin, 1989).

Communication and district programs. D'Angelo and Adler (1991) illustrated districtwide programs from various regions of the country and, using successful strategies of Chapter 1 parent/community involvement programs, described effective communication in three areas: face-to-face communication, the use of technology, and written communication.

Districts in Lima, Ohio; Buffalo, New York; Natchez/Adams, Mississippi; and the Migrant Education State Parent Advisory Council in New York have made communication with parents and community a focal point of their parent/community involvement programs. These agencies have used parent conferencing techniques and the establishment of parenting centers within schools as vehicles for communication.

The use of various forms of electronic media (e.g., television, videotape, telephone) are used in district programs to facilitate communication between schools and families/communities. Efforts in McAllen, Texas; Poudre School District (Fort Collins, Colorado); San Diego, California; Indianapolis, Indiana; Casey County, Kentucky; and Omaha, Nebraska have successfully integrated technology into their parent/family/community programs.

Written communication has been used effectively in parent involvement programs in Omaha, Nebraska; Cahokia, Illinois; and Palatine, Illinois. Most frequently mentioned written methods include newsletters, calendars, and handbooks to help parents help their children at home.

D'Angelo and Adler (1991) provided four caveats for improving communication:

- Communication strategies for individual schools should be adapted to match the needs of families.
- Materials must reach the intended audience.
- If a meeting, workshop, presentation, assembly, or other event presents information deemed essential for parents, then the schools must find other ways to get that information to those who cannot be there.
- Don't wait for a problem to arise before contacting parents.

Key Players

Leadership is a key characteristic that contributes to the effectiveness of parent and community involvement at the school level. Procedures for involving community members must be clearly communicated and applied consistently. Parents need to know that their involvement does make a difference and that the school honestly welcomes their participation (NorthWest Regional Education Laboratory, 1990). The responsibility for effective involvement must begin with building administrators and teachers (Center for Evaluation, Development and Research, 1990). They are the ones having direct contact with parents and community members, and it is their leadership that sets both the tone and the standards. Training may be necessary for the school staff and parents to optimize the activities, procedures, and practices.

Key Player: Principals. The principal, in particular, must ensure that there is adequate money, time, personnel, and space to address the needs of parent and community involvement within the school (Chrispeels, 1991b). This leadership role of the principal is particularly important beyond the elementary school because of the decrease in parent involvement with each passing grade. By making involvement a focal point of both spoken and written communications, the principal regularly can emphasize involvement opportunities to the parents in school newsletters and at meetings. It is important that the principal have an understanding of, and be able to work with, all types of families and appropriately apply parent involvement strategies with attention to family differences. In addition, the principal must ensure that parent and community involvement in the school is well planned, comprehensive, and systematic (Chrispeels, et al., 1988; Henderson and Marburger, 1986, Northwest Regional Education Laboratory, 1990). Chrispeels (1991a) and Henderson (1986) provide assessment and planning checklists to facilitate effective parent and community involvement.

Key Player: Teachers. Teachers can reach out to parents to form partnerships that benefit families and enhance the educational progress of their students. Teachers can share insights with parents regarding the school as a whole and their individual classrooms. They can provide tips on academic subjects and how parents can help with homework. They can encourage parents to volunteer in the school and share their knowledge, skills, and perceptions to continuously improve the educational program. Teachers who take such initiatives tend to have higher student achievement gains and feel better supported by parents (Epstein and Becker, 1982; Epstein, 1987c; Tangri and Moles, 1987).

Key Player: District leadership. District leadership is necessary to provide a comprehensive and coordinated effort for creating and sustaining effective parent and community involvement. By aligning district policy with practice, districts are better able to fulfill the promise that parent and community involvement offers in the development of quality education for all students.

Resources Needed to Develop, Implement, and Sustain Parent and Community Involvement Programs

To be successful, parent and community involvement programs need to garner sufficient resources including financial, human, staff development and time to coordinate. This section addresses each of these areas, with attention to how each contributes to the effectiveness of the partnership.

Key Resource: Funding. Currently across the United States, funding for program development and evaluation at the state level is lacking (Nardine and Morris, 1991). Epstein (1991b) estimated that a district commitment to parent involvement should be approximately $10 per student. Combined with school- and state-level funds, this amount would provide a supportive structure for ensuring successful school/home partnerships. She also pointed out that grant monies can be used as a motivator for school leaders - and ultimately result in positive support for parent/community programs, and schoolwide change. Chavkin and Williams (1987) suggested that school districts need to provide monetary resources for the implementation of effective programs. The provision of resources, they argue, helps emphasize the importance of parent involvement in education and demonstrates a commitment to its success.

Key Resource: Personnel. Sufficient staff are needed to operate effective programs (Williams and Chavkin, 1990). Epstein (1991b) recommended that a family/school coordinator be hired to coordinate and link school, district, and state efforts. She underscored the important role of the coordinator to guide school staffs, provide inservice training for educators, offer services to parents, and perform other tasks that promote partnerships. Both Berla (1991) and Earle (1990) recommended that a full-time parent/school partnership position be created on each middle school campus. The responsibilities of this staff person would be to work with families and school personnel (such as counselors, administrators, teachers) in assuring the success of students at risk of failure or dropping out. Aggressive, ongoing, outreach efforts may be needed to procure the participation of "hard to reach" parents (Zeldin, 1989; Dauber and Epstein, 1991). These families may also need to be acculturated to the new school norms of parent involvement, particularly if they had viewed parent involvement as unwelcome (Simich-Dudgeon, 1986).

Key Resource: Training. Not all professionals place a high value on parent involvement (Dauber and Epstein, 1991). Teachers should receive preservice and inservice training if they are to implement a successful parent involvement program (Zeldin, 1990; Chrispeels, 1991b; Dauber and Epstein, 1991; Comer 1988a). For example, teachers may need training to develop new means of communicating with parents, effective communication skills such as active listening and showing empathy, interpersonal skills such as perspective taking and conflict resolution, and skills for working with parents from a variety of backgrounds and life styles. Epstein and Dauber (1989a) pointed out that math, science, and social studies teachers may require more assistance than reading and language arts teachers since they currently do not place as much value on parent involvement.

Planners of home-based parent involvement, especially those in schools serving low income or minority students, need to take care that they reach parents who most need to be involved and teach skills that parents want to learn. They should not imply that school success is "only for those children whose parent are willing to conform to established middle class norms" (Flaxman and Inger, 1991). If teachers and administrators are not aware of these pitfalls, they are likely to reinforce home-school barriers that are already in place.

Effective districtwide parent involvement programs reveal that a key component is training for practitioners (see, for example the Indianapolis "Parents In Touch" program described by Warner [1991], or the efforts in San Diego described by Chrispeels [1991b]). Oakes and Lipton (1990) argue against top-down authority and point out that teachers need to be provided with resources and technical assistance, particularly related to finding creative ways to increase learning in the classroom and at home. The Williams and Chavkin (1990) study of promising programs in the southwestern United States indicated that training was essential for an effective parent involvement program.

Training for school/family/community partnerships should also include parent training, especially related to helping parents acquire parenting ideas and leadership strategies for helping their children achieve literacy skills (Clark, 1989). The section of this literature review on Home Learning examined the relationships between effective parenting, home learning, and the need for parent and school staff training on how to reach these positive outcomes.

Key Resource: Coordination. Davies (1985) wrote that "co-production", i.e., individual and collective activities in the school or home that contribute to more effective instruction and school achievement should be initiated by teachers and principals and coordinated with all school personnel. Co-production includes home tutoring programs, homework assistance and hotlines, frequent reporting of student progress, and specific suggestions for reinforcement and enrichment activities. Co-production can be initiated by teachers with parents, through a variety of activities. These activities include: parent education programs to inform families of school and class learning objectives; home visitor programs for those needing specific guidance; and the involvement of low income and immigrant families and parent volunteers to help teachers in the classroom and to help develop home learning activities. The implementation of such a project would require a significant investment of time and funds for development and promotion of materials and for appropriate teacher and parent training. Additional funds and arrangements would also be required to provide surrogate families for students whose families are not able to participate. Churches, social agencies, and community organizations could be contacted to provide the surrogate families.

McLaughlin and Shields (1987) suggested a combination of norm-based pressure and support to encourage educators to implement a home learning parent involvement program. Included were such things as providing incentives to teachers to try new practices, disseminating information about the nature and effect of parent involvement programs, and providing specific models of parent involvement that have proven to be effective. If these efforts were successful, teachers would require materials, training, networks, and mini-grants to help them implement the practices. Chrispeels

(1991b) goes further by saying that additional resources will be needed for recognition and reinforcement of staff, parents, and students who participate.

While some recent research has focused on methods for creating positive learning environments in the home (for example Walberg, 1984), others emphasize programs for increasing teachers' and administrators' understandings of the 'natural' learning that occurs with the home (Brice and Heath, 1983; Cochran and Henderson, 1986). Rich (1985) advocates community outreach efforts, noting that the greater the continuity and contact, the greater the benefit for the child.

Summary

Parents and community members can adopt a variety of roles and relationships with schools. Three of the most critical roles they can assume are:

- becoming primary educational resources for their children;
- becoming supporters and/or advocates for children through site-based school restructuring efforts; and
- participating in the development and implementation of district programs that support partnerships.

Home learning activities present the most common vehicles through which parents and community members assume primary educational roles for middle grade children. The most successful of these activities incorporate practices that take local factors into account and that build on parent strengths. Promotion of home learning is best accomplished by using multiple methods and by being both sufficiently clear and sufficiently flexible about expectations being made of parents. Home learning activities often take the form of modeling high expectations, supporting schoolwork and homework, and providing a positive learning climate in the home. Specific activities benefit from being more stimulating and fun.

By focusing on quality education for all students, parents, and community members can be effective supporters and advocates for their children in programs developed and implemented at local sites. This approach assumes that all families, no matter what their structure, economic background or culture, will be encouraged to help children acquire skills and content that lead to greater achievement. Home practices to be encouraged include modeling, setting high but realistic expectations for student learning, facilitating the completion of homework and other school assignments, attending conferences and actively communicating with the school. School practices that make positive contributions to this relationship include site based management, clear and welcoming policies and communications, liaison person, physical accommodations, and planning geared toward determining and meeting families' needs.

Districtwide parent and community involvement programs also need to embrace the diversity of families in the design of policies, programs, and practices. while the literature is not clear as to the optimal separate and joint roles of state and local policies, research does show that both can be effective, particularly in written form. Policies at any level should contain methods by which all parents, regardless of socioeconomic, linguistic, or literacy backgrounds, can be informed about programs and the progress of their children. Professional development opportunities for staff on the various aspects of parent involvement enhance the effectiveness of any program. Recognizing and valuing diversity in family structures, circumstances, and responsibilities is also a key feature of effective policies. Finally, linking the various groups and agencies that support education with both schools and families strengthens the overall partnership.

The research literature reveals overarching elements that affect the home/school connection in whatever form it takes. Two-way communication surfaces repeatedly as a key to successful partnerships. The valence of the communication is also important with researchers concluding that negative communication is often the norm, sometimes with reverberating negative effects. To improve communication, schools must become more inclusive and creative, taking advantage of electronic media, new parent conferencing techniques, and a knowledge of the local community.

Key players in the partnerships include principals, teachers, and district administrators. Each should assume responsibilities within the home/school relationship and adopt facilitative roles. Finally, adequate resources must be available to enable the development and implementation of programs. These resources include funding, but also emphasize sufficient numbers of staff, training for all partners, and close coordination of all activites and interested parties. More linkages benefit all constituents, including the children.

CHAPTER 4
CREATING PARTNERSHIPS: THE IMPACT OF PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS

OVERVIEW

A primary dilemma faced by policymakers and practitioners is establishing strong claims about the outcomes of any program. Typical experimental designs include random assignment of subjects. While the application of these designs is possible in other situations and circumstances, are not often accepted in studies of educational programs. Without random assignment a direct link between cause and effect cannot be established. In other words, without random assignment it is impossible to determine if the outcomes of a program are the direct result of the program itself.

Studies of educational programs seek to explain why, how, and whether programs work. Their designs attempt to "partition out" the effects of a variable, or set of variables, in order to determine the contribution of certain features to overall program outcomes.

Most often the outcomes of educational programs are the result of the interaction of many complex variables. The interactive nature of these variables is elusive and the ability to make **definitive** statements about their effects on outcomes is problematic. However, considerable research has been done which establishes an **associative link**, or correlation, between school efforts to create partnerships with parents, families, and community members and outcomes for students, parents, school personnel, and schools and school districts:

- School and parent/family/community partnerships are associated with positive effects on **student outcomes**, e.g., higher levels of achievement as measured by standardized test scores; factual, conceptual, critical, and attitudinal aspects of learning.

- Acquisition of new skills; increased involvement, interaction with their children, and positive self-concept are examples of **parent outcomes** associated with school/family partnerships.

- **Teacher outcomes** associated with partnerships included positive attitudes, the use of varied strategies, and an increased sense of self-efficacy.

- Positive effects for **schools and school districts** were found through the partnerships schools forge with parents/families/communities. An increase in student attendance rates; reductions in dropout, delinquency, and pregnancy rates; and improved discipline practices were associated with these partnerships.

The remainder of this chapter focuses on the research related to the outcomes claimed by programs that involve school, parent, family, and community partnerships. As a cautionary note, readers should be aware that the research cited pertains to general outcomes at all levels, **not specifically to the middle grades.**

The Impact of Parent and Community Involvement Programs

Involving parents in the education of their children has been found to have an associated link not only with students but also with parents, teachers, schools, and districts (Becker and Epstein, 1982b; Comer, 1986; Epstein, 1991a). These outcomes include increased student achievement, increased student attendance, lower dropout rates, increased interactions between parents and their children at home and increased positive attitudes by teachers toward parents being involved. This section on the associated effects of parent involvement in the middle grades examines student, teacher, parent, school, and district outcomes.

In general, the research demonstrates that parents can be powerful contributors to their children's education, both stimulating and reinforcing their children's learning. However, parent involvement should not be viewed as an educational panacea (Ascher, 1987; Brown, 1989). As Ascher, (1987:17-18) warns: "Although the problem for schools in the next period will be to give some priority to parent involvement efforts, educators should not demand more from this strategy than it can deliver. Nothing would be gained by subjecting parents to another round of blame when home learning does not yield hoped for improvements."

Student Outcomes

Studies of the effects of parent involvement were almost always measured in terms of student achievement as indicated by grades or even more commonly, by standardized test scores. Most of the studies on the influence of parent involvement have focused on elementary schools. In most cases, it is difficult to establish causality. It is also impossible to compare results from one study to another to determine which of the activities have had the greatest impact (Zeldin, 1989). As Clarke-Stewart (1983) pointed out, these family behaviors probably interact, and these interactions have not been examined.

Shields and McLaughlin (1987) reported that there are two facts that are "fairly well settled" in the literature regarding the link between parent involvement and student achievement. First, students, including students from low SES whose parents are involved in their schools, do better in their academic subjects than those students whose parents are less involved (Stevenson and Baker, 1987; Rood, 1988; Henderson, 1987; Jacob, 1983; Comer, 1984; Walberg, 1984; McCormick, 1989). Second, those schools where parents are well informed and highly involved are most likely to be effective schools (Brandt, 1986; Chubb, 1988; Comer, 1984; Henderson, 1988b; Jacob, 1983; Purkey and Smith, 1983; Walberg, 1984). Other studies have indicated that students are less likely to drop out of schools when parents are involved (Henderson, 1988a; McCormick, 1989).

Research on the effects of specific home learning activities has also been conducted. The assignment and completion of homework that is consistent with a student's ability, for example, was found to have uniformly positive effects on factual, conceptual, critical and attitudinal aspects of learning (Zeldin, 1989; Chrispeels, 1991a; Walberg, 1984. Similarly, monitoring of television viewing, structuring home routines, and offering verbal praise were associated with student achievement. Students also were found to have developed better study habits and social skills (Zeldin, 1989).

Nearly all of the research reviewed showed that increased parent involvement was consistently associated with positive results, although "nothing so dramatic as to suggest a revolution in the educational process" (Ascher, 1987:17). Many researchers found that students whose parents were involved scored higher on achievement tests (Epstein, 1991a; de Kanter, et al., 1987; Epstein and Dauber, 1989a; Henderson, 1988a; Benson et. al., 1980). However, in one study of fifth graders, Epstein (1991a) found that while parent involvement was related to positive achievement in reading, it was not found to be related to achievement in math.

Parent outcomes

Parents involved in their children's schools acquire new skills, gain confidence, and improve employment opportunities (Comer, 1984). Further, parents are more likely to increase their involvement over time (Herman and Yeh, 1983) and spend more time working with their children at home on school-related tasks (Becker and Epstein, 1981). In addition, participating parents who are involved are likely to have more positive attitudes about themselves, including more self-confidence.

Becker and Epstein (1982b), Dauber and Epstein (1991), Epstein and Dauber (1988a,b), and Epstein (1986b; 1991a) found that parents who were involved in their children's learning increased their interactions with children at home, felt more positively about their abilities to help their elementary school-aged children, and rated their children's teachers as better instructors.

Chrispeels (1991b) noted that schools implementing programs to encourage home learning may encounter several dilemmas. They must determine both how to implement programs that do not favor children who are already doing well and how to evaluate the programs effectively in order to make resource allocation decisions. School staff need to communicate in such a way that teachers and parents together can determine what specific activities will suit individual children best, finding a way to balance creativity and individualized attention with the need for consistent guidelines and practices. The schools also need to create safety nets for children whose parents are unable or unwilling to respond.

Research also indicated that home learning programs should not necessarily be limited to parents helping children with academic tasks. Epstein (1987a) has shown that it is important for parents to promote the development of children's curiosity or self-esteem as motivators for learning.

Teacher outcomes

Teachers' attitudes and behaviors influence whether attempts are even made to involve these parents. Teachers who do involve these parents are much less likely to make stereotypical judgments about the willingness and abilities of these categories of parents to help (Becker and Epstein, 1982a; Epstein, 1986b). Involving parents more often and more productively necessitates more than a change of attitudes, however. According to Epstein, it "requires changing the major location of parent involvement from the school to the home, changing the major emphasis from general policies to specific skills, and changing the major target from the general population of students or school staff to the individual child at home" (Jennings, 1990:23).

The more frequently teachers were engaged in parent involvement activities, the more positive their attitudes became about parents and the more likely they included parent input in decisions about curriculum development and instructional strategies (Epstein and Becker, 1987). Teachers' attitudes toward parents also improved as a result of parent involvement. Teachers who promoted parent involvement saw more value in holding conferences and communicating with parents about school programs and student progress (Epstein and Dauber, 1991).

Teachers who acknowledge the benefits of parent involvement were found to be more likely to overcome obstacles through the use of a variety of parent involvement strategies. They were also more likely to seek training to improve their skills for involving parents in the schools (Becker and Epstein, 1982b; Purnell and Gotts, 1985).

In a study of elementary schools, Hoover-Dempsey, et.al. (1987) found that teacher efficacy was also related to the strength of parent involvement programs. Teachers who felt that they were capable and effective were more likely to conduct conferences with parents and to assign interactive homework activities.

While individual teachers' practices were a key factor in building parent involvement programs, they were not the only factor. In schools where teachers perceived that they, their colleagues, and parents supported parent involvement, programs and practices were stronger (Dauber and Epstein, 1991).

School and district outcomes

Comer (1984) found that those schools with parent involvement have an improved school climate. He reported that the parent involvement programs established in elementary schools in New Haven, Connecticut decreased conflict and apathy in the school and produced a more positive climate for teaching and learning. Further, he asserted that parent involvement in a well-structured and well-managed program helped to eliminate harmful stereotypes that teachers held about the families of the students they taught. Peterson (1989) noted that parent involvement also produced long term effects. Citing a number of studies, he found that increased parent involvement positively affected student attendance rates and was associated with reductions in dropout, delinquency, and pregnancy rates. Students' citizenship and social values were also found to be more positive. Zeldin (1989) cited research that showed improved discipline practices and increased support for students' educational activities.

Armor, et al., (1976) showed that while efforts to involve parents of Black children in their sixth grade students' education was successful, efforts to involve Mexican American parents and community members were not. The authors attributed this difference to language barriers and to the differential content of the school's outreach effort.

The positive effects of parent involvement may help to counterbalance the effects of economic disadvantagement. As summarized by the U.S. Department of Education (1986), "What parents do to help their children learn is more important to academic success than how well-off the family is." While many researchers (Henderson, 1987) found this to be the case, several others refuted this claim. Benson, et al.(1980), for example, found that while parent involvement made a difference in middle class families, it did little to affect achievement in either high or low socioeconomic groups.

A few studies examined the differences in effect between school-based and home-based parent involvement. Toomey (1986) found that programs for low income parents that featured home visits were more successful in generating involvement than those requiring school visits, though the latter yielded greater reading gains.

It is obvious that a more concerted effort to document the effects of parent and community involvement will yield information and research for increasing the effectiveness of such programs. By better defining the outcomes that are being sought, the research can be fine-tuned to provide a more detailed analysis regarding those practices that are truly effective.

Summary

While the research on the impact of parent and community involvement programs does not show a definitive causal link, many studies demonstrate a correlation between programs and outcomes. Nearly all of the research shows that these programs are associated with positive student outcomes, including increased student achievement. Parents who participate in these programs were found to have more interactions with their children in their homes and in some cases, to acquire new skills and more positive attitudes toward teachers and schools. Teachers also developed more positive attitudes toward parents, especially as they engaged more often and more directly in the parent involvement activities. School climate also improves.

Long term effects are more difficult to demonstrate. Some researchers suggest a relationship between parent involvement and reduction in dropout, delinquency, and pregnancy rates. Others show a relationship to improved attendance, discipline and long term student achievement. Several researchers caution that the effects of parent involvement may vary based on family socioeconomic status and ethnicity. Much more research is needed in this area to determine exactly what outcomes are produced, under what condition, and what the longer term effects of particular programs and practices are.

CHAPTER 5

CREATING PARTNERSHIPS: CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

OVERVIEW

As educators continue to struggle with the questions of how to design the best structures, programs, and practices to meet students' and society's needs, they must consider the most effective ways to create and use partnerships with parents and communities to help accomplish this task. The research literature on parent and community involvement in the middle grades is sparse, but what does exist illuminates some of the challenges and some ways that schools and parents can forge relationships to meet those challenges and produce positive outcomes for students, parents, schools, and society as a whole.

This review of the literature on parent and community involvement and literature related specifically to the middle grades was guided by three questions:

- What are the **contexts** within which parent and community involvement programs operate?

  Context refers to the policy environment; trends and factors influencing parent and community involvement that include: diversity within systems, families, communities and economies; perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs; institutional settings; pre-adolescent and adolescent development; and expectations, attitudes, and beliefs.

- What are the **roles** that parents, families, and community members assume in the education of their children?

  Roles of parents and/or community members are described as: a primary resource in the education of their children through participation in home learning activities; supporters and advocates for the education of their children through site-based restructuring efforts at the local level; and participants in the education of all children through districtwide parent involvement programs.

- What are the **effects** of promising programs on parents, students, school staff, schools, and/or school districts?

  Effects of parent involvement programs relate to the outcomes for students, parents, teachers, and schools and school districts.

It is around these questions that the conclusions, implications and recommendations for future research directions are made.

Conclusions

This review of the literature on parent involvement, and literature related specifically to the middle grades has indicated that the following conclusions appear to be warranted. The conclusions are stated in terms of the findings about successful middle grade school/family partnerships and parent involvement efforts.

Successful middle grade school/family partnerships:

- are supported through well-developed policies at the school, district, state and federal level;
- consider the highly-related trends and factors that influence all school/family partnerships and parent and community involvement programs in the design, plan, and implementation of these programs; trend and factors specific to the middle grades are given priority;
- use parents, families, and community members in appropriate roles through home learning, school restructuring activities, and districtwide involvement programs;
- employ frequent, varied, two-way communication;
- value the roles of key players, such as parents, teachers, school personnel, and community members;
- provide sufficient physical, human, and fiscal resources and training; and
- attempt to measure student, parent, teacher, school and school district outcomes through both formative and summative evaluation methods.

Implications: Policies at various levels can help to inform and institutionalize effective practices. At the school level, policies can suggest the need for reciprocity, local decisionmaking that is responsible to school/community needs, and specific practices such as homework completion standards that may be uniformly required or encouraged. Site-based management practices lead to an even greater need for partnerships and parent involvement based on common goals and understandings. Such policies can also serve to guarantee or at least recommend that sufficient resources are allocated to the programs that have been jointly designed. Schools should be careful to design policies that reflect partnerships and avoid those based on a "deficit model" of parenting where the focus is on improving parents.

District policies serve many of the same functions and can also be used to promote equity across schools. Effective district policies may address roles of key players, communication strategies, particular practices or program structures, content areas, and community outreach.

State and federal policies tend to serve other functions. They may encourage or require particular forms of parent involvement, may lay out specific parameters for that involvement, and even provide for funding. However, because such policies are "top-down", their ability to assure the effectiveness of local implementation strategies is limited. However, they serve an important motivating role through both the symbolic and real commitment to the partnership that they make.

The first step in understanding how trends and factors are related involves the development of a knowledge base. Through this knowledge base all key players (parents, teachers, administrators and interested community members) can develop an understanding of the rich context in which successful parent involvement programs operate. This includes understanding pre-adolescent and adolescent development and how this impacts a child's relationship with peers, teachers, authority figures and motives to succeed; the variety of ways in which adolescents express their needs and feelings; and ways to capitalize on the newly emerging quests for independence, connectedness and identity. Key players need to understand how various school structures affect partnerships. How schools are organized, how curriculum is delivered, where schools are located and the sheer size of classes and schools all impact the ways that parent and community programs should be designed and delivered.

Other features of the context must also be understood. All involved parties should seek to understand and value the diversity that exists within and between them. Varying economic, cultural and social backgrounds should be used to shed light on circumstances affecting behaviors, beliefs and attitudes of students and home/community/school partners. Differences should be viewed as potential assets in seeking to expand options and opportunities for program design.

The partnership itself should be viewed strategically, with constituents engaging in discussions designed to achieve consensus on valued goals and student outcomes. Parent and community members should be viewed as co-equals who bring valued expertise on their own children, family and community needs; teachers and administrators should be viewed as co-equals who bring valued expertise on educational practices and strategies. Together, these groups can work toward achieving the same ends, that is, increased student achievement, positive climate, and other desired goals.

A variety of different practices, programs and partnerships can be developed and implemented. One of the most promising is the creation of a home learning program. Such programs can be designed in the same way any successful program is designed, initially conducting a needs assessment with all affected parties, analyzing the challenges presented and engaging in problem-solving techniques to meet the challenges. The research suggests that effective home learning programs use multiple methods for recruitment, understand local conditions and practices, and build on parent/family/community strengths. Clear communication that features specific advice and strategies, meaningful, interesting and flexible activities and guidance as to appropriate student and parent roles are most successful. Information on parenting styles, household routines, adolescent behavior and other related topics has been found to be useful. Finally, being clear on expectations, learning objectives and student progress helps partners to understand the rationale underlying the activities and the motivation to complete them.

As parents and family members assume a broader role in education, either by serving as advocates or partners in education or through decisionmaking for restructuring, their information needs increase. In addition to understanding the context that affect their own children, they need to gain insight into the entire community of children. They also need to familiarize themselves with many other aspects of schooling, including the literature on effective organization, instruction and assessment and legislative, financial and other constraints.

A promising area here is to develop partnerships around the concept of quality education using tools, such as Total Quality Management (TQM). Discussions can center around, for example, holistic and developmental approaches to learning, determining outcomes in the form of what children should know and be able to do, and jointly determining the best definitions of roles and relationships to accomplish these ends for all children.

Any parent/community involvement program must have sufficient staff, funding, training, and planning to be successful. Their effectiveness is likely to be enhanced if these programs are well-coordinated with other community efforts. Linkage to other schools, recreational centers, social service agencies, health agencies and other community groups serves a synergistic function, with the children as ultimate beneficiaries.

The paucity of research on parent involvement in the middle grades illustrates what little is known about programs and practices that specifically benefit children during these crucial years in their development. Most of the research is descriptive in nature, so little can be concluded about direct effects. While it is clear that there is an association between parent involvement and student achievement, for example, there is not enough research to identify optimal practices, to reveal the conditions under which programs are more or less effective, to understand how and why the relationship works, and to know whether replication in other sites produces similar results. Some researchers are making strides in this direction, but a much greater effort is needed, along with sufficient funding to make the research possible.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research on school/family partnerships and parent involvement in education should be directed toward:

- *middle grade education, based on specific roles as schools/families/communities join together to benefit students;*

  Although more attention is being devoted to middle grade education, the knowledge base in both research and practice needs to be expanded. This knowledge base should include a broad range of possibilities that school personnel, parents, families and community members can play in working together. Research and practice should focus on how these roles are facilitated within education and community organizational structures, and how different groups will depend on each other as their members play various roles in building partnerships.

- *both quantitative and qualitative analyses of the context and processes of developing, planning and implementing middle grade school/family partnerships and parent involvement programs;*

  The sheer variety of family and community systems presents a challenge to partnership building, as do economic differences among the populations served by middle grade schools. Research should give us greater insights into these and other factors affecting partnerships: group culture and beliefs that influence individuals' perceptions of the schooling situation and their attitudes toward it; organizational barriers or supports to active involvement; attitudes of key players toward school/family partnerships; and possible resources, including training strategies and practice. Applied research can be directed to assist in choices of action that take these factors into account. Such action might include targeting specific resources and training toward parents, families community members or school personnel; improving communication skills among participants or using various media as channels for communication; assigning additional school personnel to link schools more directly with parents, families, and community members, and coordinating services with other community organization or agencies that work with children, families, and neighborhoods.

- *the challenges to forming middle grade school/family partnerships, and the strategies used to meet those challenges;*

  Research should focus on the challenges of diversity within family, community and economic systems as they affect partnerships; the perceptions, attitudes and beliefs of key players; the institutional setting as a challenge to active involvement; the attitudes and beliefs of key players toward school/family partnerships; and resources and training. Strategies to meet these challenges are a worthwhile area for future study. These might include: dedicated resources and training for parents, families, community members and school personnel; communication; additional school personnel to directly link schools with parents, families, and community members; and coordination of services.

- *short and long-term potential outcomes of the partnership on students, teachers, schools, school districts and communities.*

  Short-term potential outcomes worthy of study include: higher levels of achievement as measured by standardized test scores; factual, conceptual and critical aspects of learning; acquisition of new skills, increased involvement; the use of varied strategies; increased student attendance rates, reductions in dropout, delinquency, and pregnancy rates; and improved discipline practices. Long-term potential outcomes that merit attention include: improved attitudes about schooling for all participants; empowerment and increased self-efficacy of parents, families, teachers and other school personnel, and community members; and increased family interactions.

This research review shows that creating partnerships between school, parents, families and communities can provide a promising avenue through which education can be more effective in achieving its goals. As reform efforts continue to grow the education community should be encouraged to explore this potential to its fullest.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
CREATING FAMILY/SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS
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APPENDIX B
CREATING FAMILY/SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS
ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ascher, C. (1987). *Improving the home-school connection for poor and minority urban students.* ERIC/CUE Trends and Issues, 8. New York: Columbia University Teachers College. Eric Clearinghouse on Urban Education.

This article includes the definition of roles (i.e., decision-maker, supporter, advocate, teacher) parents can play in their children's education. A variety of research studies on the effects of parent involvement are cited. Some suggestions for making the involvement of low-income parents easier are included, as well as ways to convince parents to become involved. Particular attention is paid to parent involvement in home learning activities.

Becker, H.J. and Epstein, J.L. (1982). *Influence on teachers' use of parent involvement at home.* Report Number 324. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University, Center for Social Organization of Schools.

This paper provides an analysis of different ways in which teachers use parental involvement strategies. Survey data from 3,698 teachers in 600 schools in Maryland examined the effects of techniques used, including most successful and least successful strategies. Techniques used depended upon teachers' attitudes and behavior, parental characteristics, and grade level, including separate discussion of fifth grade results. The 14 most commonly used strategies were examined. Attention was also given to obstacles to the use of parent involvement strategies. Most teachers who acknowledged benefits of parental involvement overcame these obstacles.

Bliss, B. (1986). Literacy and the limited English population: A national perspective. In C. Simich-Dudgeon (Ed.), *Issues of Parent Involvement and Literacy.* Proceedings of symposium held at Trinity College, Washington, DC.

Two myths often surround discussions of literacy in the United States: (1) that the current school reform movement benefits minority students; and (2) that a technological and information age has emerged that requires new, higher literacy levels. Neither is accurate, for there is no economic imperative for the improvement of literacy, only an urgent social imperative. The implications for enhancing parent involvement include: (1) having realistic expectations about the capabilities of the parents; (2) realizing that immigrant and refugee children often pick up English and become Americanized much more quickly than their parents; (3) understanding that the children who need help the most are those who do not have a parent available to become involved; (4) making educational programs part of a larger array of support systems and services; (5) being aware of a key distinction between immigrant populations and students born and raised in American language minority neighborhoods; (6) focusing our energy and programs at the junior high and middle school levels, where children are a captive audience and still exploring their options; and (7) working in partnership with the private sector in our communities.

Brantlinger, E. (1985a). Low income parents' opinions about the social class composition of schools. *American Journal of Education, 93*(3), 389-408.

Interviews with low income parents revealed that they were aware of the class character of local schools and believed that high-income schools were superior. Ninety-four percent favored social class school desegregation, believing that their children would thereby obtain a better education and better preparation for social interaction in adult life.

Brantlinger, E. (1985b). Low income parents' perceptions of favoritism in the schools. *Urban Education, 20*(1), 82-102.

Low income parents were interviewed regarding their perspective and feelings regarding class differences in the schools. Most parents felt that schools favor students of higher socioeconomic status. Though they showed interest and concern in their children's education, these parents felt powerless to alter the inequalities they perceived.

Cale, L. (1990). *Planning for parent involvement: A handbook for administrators, teachers, and parents.* Phoenix, AZ: Publisher.

An excellent resource of ideas and materials for teachers, parents and school administrators to be used for parent involvement planning. Topics include: benefits of parent involvement; how parents want to be involved; the changing American family; changing demographics; identifying obstacles and finding opportunities; principles of effective family-school partnerships; suggestions for successful parental involvement in education; types of parent involvement; and steps for developing successful parent involvement programs. Questionnaires, checklists, ideas, recent legislation, resources and references are also included.

Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development. (1989). *Turning points: Preparing American youth for the 21st century.* The Report of the Task Force on Education of Young Adolescents. Carnegie Corporation of New York.

This report examines the condition of America's young adolescents and how well middle grade schools, health organizations, and community organizations serve them. The Task Force makes recommendations for new structures for middle grade education, which the Task Force believes will help to preserve a strong and vital America.

Chavkin, N.F. and Williams D.L. Jr. (1987). Enhancing parent involvement: Guidelines for access to an important resource for school administrators. *Education and Urban Society,* February, 19, 164-84, EJ 351 805.

This article poses a number of theories on parent involvement, such as: administrators must visualize a broader role for parents to participate in their children's education, yet administrators fail to capitalize on parents as an educational resource; parents fail to recognize administrators as access points to the increased involvement they deserve; Parent-administrator partnerships do not automatically reduce the tensions and value differences which exist. Two surveys conducted - one given to administrators, who were asked their attitudes, current practices, and policies related to parent involvement in elementary school.

Parents were given the survey with similar questions. Methods, analysis, and results of the survey are examined.

Chrispeels, J.A. (1987). The family as an educational resource. *Community Education Journal*, April, 10-17.

This paper reports on a three-year project to find ways to strengthen home-school partnerships. Emphasizes the need for parents to have basic information about school goals, programs, and policies in order to support their children at school and home. Techniques for establishing two-way communication were developed emphasizing listening to parents. Schools must develop ways for parents to learn how to help their children, including workshops, and newsletters. Encouraging communication with parents also leads to their effective participation in school policy-making decisions.

Chrispeels, J. (1991). District leadership in parent involvement: Policies and actions in San Diego, *Phi Delta Kappan*, 72(3), 367-371.

Recent California state and district policy initiatives place emphasis on the multifaceted nature of parent involvement and the need for active support. Many district policies provide a clearer definition of parent involvement in the schools. The San Diego County Office of Education has supported the development of both policies and practices in the county's schools by serving as an information clearing house, by acting as a source of direct services to parents and by providing staff development and assistance planning to schools. The San Diego School Board has committed itself to involve parents as partners in school governance, establish effective two-way communication with parents, develop strategies and structures for active participation of parents in their children's education and to use the schools to connect families with community resources.

Clark, R.M. (1989). *The role of parents in ensuring education success in school restructuring efforts.* Copyright by Council of Chief State School Officers.

Reginald Clark offers suggestions on the role of parents in ensuring education success by first examining how successful and non-successful students spend their time. He reports that over 180 school days successful students spend more than 630 hours in literacy activities while non-achieving students spend only about 270 hours.

Clark discusses the home and community curriculum that is necessary for school success. He examines the role of state education agencies in encouraging and supporting districts in four key areas: planning and implementing effective education programs; soliciting and maintaining parent involvement and community support; helping parents acquire parenting ideas and leadership strategies for helping their children achieve literacy skills; helping districts to directly help students become effectively connected to community-based programs. Clark includes the California policy and specific steps for helping schools develop a written school plan for comprehensive parent involvement activities.

Coleman, J.S. (1991). *Policy Perspectives: Parent involvement in education.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

This article shows how children learned and families functioned in the early years of our Nation. It then goes on to show the transformation in homes, schools, and society up through the present day. The author stresses parents' essential role in inculcating values and promoting learning, and highlights the important role communities play as resources for children needing or seeking help or guidance.

Comer, J.P. (1986). Parent participation in the schools. *Phi Delta Kappan*, February, 442-46.

The author states that, properly carried out, systematic programs of parent participation can benefit children's behavioral and academic development. Obstacles to parent participation in schools exist for many reasons, among them: (1) schools may not want parents present; (2) low-economic and less educated parents may feel they have nothing to contribute; and (3) teachers are not trained in working with parents. In response to those problems, the Yale Child Study Center team began to organize programs in 1968 in low-socioeconomic, under-achieving schools in New Haven, Connecticut. They found the key to improvement to be the organization of school management teams made up of staff, teachers, and parents. They developed a master plan which included building-level objectives, goals, and strategies in three areas: school climate, academics, and staff development.

Comer, J.P. (1988). School Parent Relationships that Work: An Interview with James Comer. *Harvard Education Letter*, November/December: 4-6.

This interview with James Comer is an over of his school development program initiated in 1968 in New Haven, Connecticut schools having the lowest achievement and worst behavior problems in the city. Comer's approach to school change is the coming together of key stakeholders in the educational process -- the principal, teachers, support staff, and parents. They are all represented in a governance and management group. This group develops a comprehensive school plan with a focus on creating a climate that will facilitate the social and academic growth of students. Comer explains the function of the program on the elementary level and how it had expanded into middle and high schools.

Davies, D. (1988). Low income parents and the schools: A research report and a plan for action. *Equity and Choice*, 51-57.

Parents from low-income and low-social status homes have the most to gain from parent involvement. Interviews of 150 low-income parents in Boston, Liverpool, and Portugal were conducted. Study examines reasons for social class barriers to participation and possible solutions. Results from interviews summarized that teachers and administrators are as much to blame as parents' unwillingness to participate. Examples given of three worldwide programs which promote involvement of low income families. Also cited is the Institute for Responsive Education (IRE) which has organized a demonstration project in two laboratory schools in Boston and New York to develop ways to overcome social class barriers to parent involvement. Proposed course of action outlined.

Davies, D. (1991). Schools reaching out: Family, school and community partnerships for students' success. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 72(3), 376-382.

The article describe the Schools Reaching Out national project that includes three successful practices developed in the project's demonstration schools: 1) the parent centers that were staffed by paid coordinators set up grade-level breakfasts, served as escort and referral service to health and social agencies, operated clothing exchanges, toy/book libraries and school stores, and recruited parent volunteers for teachers; 2) home visitors provided information to families about school expectations, curriculum, rules, student materials, and encouraged participation in Raise a Reader program; 3) action research teams directly involved teachers in studying home/school/community relations and in developing action plans for improving the family and community involvement at their schools.

de Kanter, A., Ginsburg, A.L. and Milne, A.M. (1986). *Parent involvement strategies: A new emphasis on traditional parent roles.* Paper presented at the Conference on Effects of Alternative Designs in Compensatory Education. Washington, DC. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 293 919).

This paper proposes a new emphasis on home-based parental involvement for parents of low-achieving children, one which takes into account realistic limitations of time and academic skills. This approach differs from federally-mandated programs for low-income parents of children served by Title I. Common characteristics of low-achievers are defined. This involvement approach is based on encouraging parents to use everyday activities in the home to develop in their children behavior and attitudes which will promote academic success.

Doherty, E.J., and Wilson, L.S. (1990). The making of a contract for education reform. *Phi Delta Kappan (71)*10, 791-96.

The article describes Boston's efforts to abandon adversarial bargaining in favor of a reform-oriented contract establishing a shared decision-making model of school-based management. The model includes significant parent involvement, a mentoring program for new teachers, a voluntary peer-assistance program for veteran teachers, and collaborative accountability features.

Epstein, J.L. (1987c). Toward a theory of family-school connections: Teacher practices and parent involvement. In K. Hurrelmann, F. Kaufmann, & F. Losel (Eds.), *Social intervention: Potential and constraints* (pp. 121-136). New York: DeGruyter.

This paper examines theories that seek to explain family and school connections, shows how data from families and schools about teacher practices of parent involvement support or refute the different theoretical perspectives, and integrates useful strands of multiple theories in a new model to explain and guide research on family and school connections and their effects on students, parents, and teachers.

Epstein, J.L. (1988). How do we improve programs for parent involvement? *Educational Horizons*, *66*(2) 58-59.

Some schools have begun to move from telling parents what their involvement is to showing them, guiding and assisting them in appropriate ways to help their children's development and learning. Results from studies of variations in school parent involvement practices show (1) school and family connections must take a developmental course; (2) the changing structure of the family requires consideration; (3) that there is no one set program of parent involvement found even in like schools; (4) each program must be tailored to its own needs and resources; (5) all grade levels need at-home learning. A list of five types of parent involvement and their goals is given.

Epstein, J.L. (1989). Family structures and student motivation: A developmental perspective. In C. Ames & R. Ames (Eds.), *Research on motivation in education: Goals and cognitions* (pp. 259-295). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

For many years, the Center has conducted research on the alternative variables of schools and classrooms - the structures that schools can change in order to promote more positive effects on student learning and development. This report refers to these structures as the TARGET structures -tasks, authority, rewards, grouping, evaluation, and time. Each of these structures can be changed by schools in ways that will promote student learning and development. The first paper in this report examines these TARGET structures as the basic building blocks of effective school and classroom organization, and relates the TARGET structures to the need to deal with student diversity and develop more effective students. The TARGET structures and their influence are not unique to schools, however, parallel structures exist in family relationships and, as in schools, the structures can be changed in families in ways that promote student motivation and thus improve student learning and development. The second paper examines the existence and influence of the TARGET structures in family relationships.

Epstein, J.L. (1991). Paths to partnerships: What we can learn from federal, state, district, and school initiatives. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 72, 344-349.

This article provides an overview of successful initiatives for connecting schools, families, and communities. On the national level, Chapter 1 programs, FIRST (Fund for the Improvement and Reform of Schools and Teaching) programs, Head Start, and the new Center on Families, Communities, Schools, and Children's Learning are discussed. Key themes across all of these initiatives are: parents and schools share common goals; programs must continue beyond early childhood; programs must include all families; programs make teachers' jobs easier; program development is not quick and easy; grants encourage participation; family/school coordinators are crucial; programs need rooms for parents; programs must reach out to parents without requiring parents to come to school; technology (radio, television, audio- and videotapes, computers) can help improve parent involvement; programs need to be evaluated. The possibilities discussed in this article offer concrete suggestions and may be adopted or revised by other educators.

Epstein, J.L. & Dauber, S.L. (1989a). *Evaluation of students' knowledge and attitudes in the Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS) social studies and art program.* (CREMS Report No. 41). Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Center for Research on Elementary and Middle Schools.

This study evaluates the implementation and effects of the Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS) Social Studies and Art Program in an urban middle school. The program links art appreciation, history, and criticism to middle school social studies curricula. The program involves parents in preparing (at home) or presenting (in school) lessons on well-known artwork. The evaluation found increased student awareness of artists and paintings, development of attitudes toward and preferences for different styles of art, and student capability and willingness to convey their likes and dislikes.

Garfunkel, F. (1986). *Parents and school: Partnerships or politics.* IRE Report No. 11. Boston: Institute for Responsive Education, ED 280 227.

The literature on parent-school relationships suggests that there have been two dominant trends in the field: the first, which advocates partnership, is consistent with keeping education and schools as they are; the second, which questions school practices, particularly as they relate to particular groups of students -- handicapped, minority, poor -- and advocates some form of an adversarial model, is focused on changing educational policies and practices. The experience of special education in setting up mechanisms for parents and students to question and oppose school policies and practices is presented as one way of responding to inequities in American schools.

Gotts, E.E., and Purnell, R.F. (1984). *Evaluation of home-school communication strategies.* Paper Presented at the Symposium on Parent Involvement in Education: Varieties and Outcomes, Annual Meeting of the American Education Research Association, New Orleans, LA, ED 244 376.

The authors have developed a conceptual approach for evaluating the effectiveness of school-home communications. They suggest that researchers should link evaluation activities to the following six aspects of the school-home communications mix: (1) academic level of interaction; (2) locus of communication; (3) intended audience; (4) school-to-home versus home-to-school; (5) topic of communication; and (6) communication method or vehicle used. Subsequent evaluation of communication strategies can lead to improving school effectiveness.

Griswold, P.A. (1986). *Parent involvement in unusually successful compensatory education.* Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, ED 279 428.

This paper evaluates the parent involvement element in 116 successful Chapter 1 projects. Parent and/or community involvement was one of three characteristics of success which appeared most often in those programs. A wide range of participation was reported. Serving on school advisory committees was the most common form followed by training parents as at-home instructors, parent-teacher meetings, classroom visitations, general awareness level workshops, social activities, volunteerism, and help with homework. The author concludes that parent involvement activities reported in pre-1982 Chapter 1 programs are only slightly different from those currently reported.

Harris, Louis et al. (1987). *The Metropolitan Life survey of the American teacher 1987: Strengthening links between home and school.* New York, NY: Louis Harris Associates, Inc.

This is the latest in a series of Metropolitan Life surveys of teachers in the United States and contains survey results gathered from both teachers and parents. The survey is based on interviews with 1,002 teachers and 2,011 parents. Tables and samples of questionnaires are included. Parents and teachers rate the quality of education and identify specific aspects of school they feel are more successful vs. less successful. The role of parents in education is critiqued and the frequency of contact, forms of involvement, and barriers are explored. New steps to strengthen ties between home and school are evaluated and parent choice in schools is explored. Parents and teachers view the problem of students dropping out of schools and indicate joint steps that can be taken to deal with the problem. Teachers' views of parent involvement are linked with job satisfaction.

Henderson, A.T. (1987). The Evidence Continues to Grow. *Columbia, MD: National Committee for Citizens in Education.*

Annotated bibliography (49 works) covering parent-child, parent-school, and community approaches to parent involvement. From the studies summarized, the editor concludes that: (1) family provides the primary educational environment; (2) involving parents improves student achievement; (3) parent involvement is most effective when it is comprehensive, long-lasting, and well-planned; and (4) benefits of parent involvement are not confined to early childhood; there are strong effects from involving parents throughout high school.

Henderson, A.T. (1988). Parents are a school's best friend. *Phi Delta Kappan*, January, 148-53.

In recent years, parent involvement in schools has been on the decline. During this same period, children have been falling behind and dropping out in record numbers. Research strongly suggests there is a connection. The author cites studies which conclude that involving parents can make a critical difference in school improvement efforts. These findings have resulted in major efforts to train teachers to work more closely with parents. Yet teacher resistance still exists, and the form parent involvement should take remains a debate. This paper examines: (1) improving parent/child relationships; (2) introducing parent involvement in the school; and (3) building a partnership between the home and the school.

Henderson, A.T., Marburger, C.L., and Ooms, T. (1986). *Beyond the bake sale: An educator's guide to working with parents.* The National Committee For Citizens in Education, 1986.

This book emphasizes that a child's education is vitally affected by the quality and character of the relationships between home and school. School reform and improvement implies that both home and school commit to a stronger and fuller communication effort, and teachers and administrators must assume the responsibility for initiating and encouraging parent involvement. Effective practices for enhancing parent involvement in schools can be replicated in virtually any school setting. Some constructive and encouraging advice is provided to help build trust and confidence between parents and educators, and to describe the different roles parents play in and around schools. Teachers and principals are provided with some compelling reasons to involve parents and with specific ways parents can be constructively involved. A checklist for gauging a school's current strengths and liabilities is provided along with suggested changes in district, state, and federal policies that will facilitate strong home-school collaboration. A synthesis of research about family-school partnerships is presented.

Henderson, P. (1987). *Parental Involvement (Los Padres Participan). Encouraging Parent Involvement Through ESL, Bilingual Parent- Teacher Workshops, Computer Literacy Classes, and the Bilingual Adult Evening School Program.* New York, NY: New York City Board of Education Office of Bilingual Education. ED 285 400.

Manual of the Bilingual Demonstration Project for the Parent Involvement Program - Los Padres Participan (New York City). The manual's purpose is to provide teachers and administrators with ideas and materials for working with a bilingual parent population in need of learning English. The materials included are: ESL dialog, parent-teacher workshop agenda, articles on parenting, cultural materials, handouts, and computer literacy teaching materials. This manual could be used in similar ESL parent programs.

McCormick, K. (1989). *An equal chance: Educating at-risk children to succeed.* Alexandria, VA: National School Boards Association.

This report describes a "third wave" of educational reform that focuses on improving academic achievement and preventing dropping out among disadvantaged children. It contains eight sections. The Executive Summary surveys the dimensions of the at-risk situation and strategies to confront it. "The Scope of the Problem" provides background on the issue and describe that is at stake for society as a whole. "Why Are Youth at Risk?" defines the problem in terms of poverty, transience and homelessness, and single-parent families. This section also describes demographic changes and discusses the following problems related to at-risk students: (1) dropping out; low academic achievement; (3) teenage parents; (4) emotional-physical health and related problems; (5) substance abuse; (6) youth unemployment; and (7) juvenile crime. "Research Related to Children at Risk" suggests the importance of parent involvement and early education. "Major Policy Statements" summarizes several papers issued recently by national organizations. In "Schools and the States Respond" the following responses to the problem are described: (1) school action; (2) local solutions; (3) state action; (4) a state action blueprint; and (5) results of a governors' report. In "Policy Implications for School Boards" the need for school restructuring is identified and 10 policy suggestions from experts on students at risk are highlighted. The final section is "A Call to Action." The report concludes with the following appendices: (1) descriptions of effective school programs; (2) descriptions of state programs; (3) an assessment instrument; and (4) a selected bibliography. Statistical data are presented in eight tables.

McLaughlin, M.W. and Shields, P.M. (1986). Involving parents in the schools: Lessons for policy. *Washington, DC: Designs for Compensatory Education: Conference Proceedings and Papers,* June 17-18, ED 293 290.

Two different modes of parent involvement are examined: (1) advisory -- associated with federal parent involvement mandates (i.e., Head Start); and (2) collaborative -- parent cooperation using either school-based or home-based methods. This paper discusses these two methods and their rationale with emphasis on low-income, low-status parents. School-based methods (volunteers, aides) were the least successful, often pointing out obvious conflicts between low-status families and teachers. Home-based (tutoring) was found to be less confrontational with teachers, created stronger parent-child bond, and showed parents the importance of their participation. Considering the positive and negative attitudes of parents and teachers towards parent participation, what is the role of policy? Guidelines for parent involvement policies are presented.

McLaughlin, M.W. and Shields, P.M. (1987). Involving low-income parents in the schools: A role for policy? *Phi Delta Kappan*, October, 156-60.

Three questions are addressed concerning a role for policy in parent involvement for low-income, poorly educated parents: (1) does parent involvement work; (2) should it be a policy priority; and (3) is it a feasible target for policy? The author concludes that before policy can play a role, teachers and administrators must first change their beliefs about low-income parents. This finding suggests a policy can modify beliefs, and that a policy approach to parent involvement an strategically combine both pressure and support. The author suggests ways in which norm-based pressure (those tied to incentives which influence behavior of school personnel) and support can be implemented to accomplish this change. Reference provided.

Moles, O.C. (1987). Who wants parent involvement? Interest, skills, and opportunities among parents and educators. *Education and Urban Society*, 19: 137-145.

The author reports on the strong interest of parents and educators in building more support for home-school collaboration. He cites studies and polls from the National Education Association, the Gallup Poll, the Parents and Teachers Association, and recent research. Despite this strong interest, the skills of parents and teachers are not well-developed. The author calls for more parent involvement efforts and more evaluation of promising programs and strategies.

Oakes, J., and Lipton, M. (1990). *Making the best of schools: A handbook for parents, teachers, and policymakers.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

This handbook shows parents and policymakers how to cooperatively improve schools for all children by explaining effective educational practices and schools for all children by explaining effective educational practices and suggesting educational policy reforms. Schools and school policies are analyzed from the following perspectives: (1) culture; (2) learning; (3) the classroom; (4) valued-knowledge; (5) evaluation and sorting; (6) special needs; (7) parent involvement; and (8) school reform. Each perspective offers a broad understanding of the following issues: (1) how the overall organization and atmosphere of a school affect students' opportunities to learn; (2) how classroom environments affects students' self-esteem; (3) how various classroom techniques affect how students learn the most important subjects; and 94) how the home environment affects school success. Recommendations are made for educational policy reform, based on democratic values and educational research. Each chapter includes suggestions for further reading. An index is appended.

Rich, D. (1986c). *The parent gap in compensatory education and how to bridge it.* Designs for Compensatory Education, Conference Proceedings and Papers. Washington, DC. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 293 921)

Emphasizes that parent involvement programs must acknowledge the difference in family structure today. Two major considerations: (1) the majority of working mothers; and (2) the

increase of single-parent families. Parents are interested in ways to help their children. Most parents are better educated today and better equipped to have more direct involvement in their children's achievement. Appropriate involvement today provides learning strategies for families to use at home. This "parent-as-tutor" approach acknowledges new family involvement limitations but maximizes that which they can do, thus achieving greater benefits. The Home and School Institute (HSI) system provides parents with techniques to increase children's learning which does not duplicate school work. Ten recommendations presented to promote successful home-school program.

Rich, D., Mattox, B., and Van Dien, J. (n.d.) *Building on family strengths: The nondeficit involvement model for teaming home and school.* Washington, DC: Home-School Institute.

The author states that creating effective parent involvement should be based on the belief that parents are the most important teachers for their children. The family, no matter how poor, can provide the best practical support for children and for schools. The nondeficit model builds on the existing strengths and creativity of homes and schools. Three programs from which data can be reported are cited.

Slaughter, D.T. & Epps, E.G. (1987). The home environment and academic achievement of Black American children and youth: An overview. *Journal of Negro Education, 86*(1), 3-20.

Parent involvement in their children's educational experiences enhances student achievement. Low socioeconomic status (SES) Black families often lack the human and material resources needed for a positive academic environment at home; however, positive learning environments do exist in some low-SES Black homes. More developmentally oriented, macrosocial studies are needed.

Sullivan, O.R. (1981). Meeting the needs of low income families with handicapped children. *Journal of the International Association of Pupil Personnel Workers, 25*(1), 26-31.

Discusses the role of pupil personnel workers and educators in providing service for handicapped children of low-income families. Parents need to be aware of their children's rights and the services available in the community and the school. Parent involvement should be encouraged.

Walberg, H.J. (1984). Improving the productivity of America's schools. *Educational Leadership,* 41, 19-27.

In his synthesis of 20 controlled studies if the past decade, Walberg found the 91 percent of the comparisons favored children in cooperative home-school programs. The effect was twice that of socioeconomic status, and some programs has effects ten times as large. The programs benefitted older as well as younger students. Walberg concludes that school parent programs to improve academic conditions in the home have an outstanding record of success in promoting achievement. He says that "the alterable curriculum of the home" is twice as predictive of academic learning as family socioeconomic status.

Whitten, C.P. (1986). Bilingual education policies: An overview. In C. Simich-Dudgeon (Ed.), *Issues of parent involvement and literacy.* Proceedings of the symposium held at Trinity College, Washington, DC.

Regulations issued in June 1986 for implementation of 1984 amendments to the Bilingual Education Act represent a major step in bringing about reform. They have three main focuses: the autonomy of the local education agencies in deciding the amount of native language instruction to be used, recognition of the importance of parental involvement in the bilingual programs, and the need for local agencies to outline plans for managing and financing the instructional program when Title VII funds are reduced or are no longer available. These reforms recognize the major role of the local community in bilingual education. It is the responsibility of those who deal with the parents of limited-English-proficient students to carry the message to them about their role in the reform's success.

Williams, D.L. (1984). *Parent involvement in education: What a survey reveals.* Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, ED 253 327.

The Parent Involvement in Education Project, a research project done by Southwestern Educational Development Laboratory, surveyed parents, teachers, principals, and school associated professionals on five different aspects of parent involvement in the elementary grades: (1) attitudes; (2) decisions; (3) roles; (4) activities; and (5) as part of teacher training. Results show parents have a high degree of interest in home-school participation. But how this is achieved shows that parents and educators have different views on certain aspects of parent involvement. Parent involvement interests extend beyond those areas designated as appropriate by the schools. In order for parent involvement to become more acceptable, viable and effective, a clear definition is necessary - one in which all can agree.

Zeldin, S. (1989). *Perspectives on parent education: Implications from research and an evaluation of new partnerships for student achievement.* Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates.

This study examines issues in designing, implementing, and evaluating programs of parent education, which are designed to promote home-school partnerships and to enhance the skills of caretakers in supporting their children's academic performance. Included in this study was an evaluation of a set of parent education programs sponsored by the Home and School Institute (HSI), called New Partnerships for Student Achievement (NPSA). The study addressed three questions: (1) what do existing research and theory identify as the primary components of effective parent-education programs; (2) what are the strengths and weaknesses of the NPSA programs; and (3) what can be learned from the NPSA programs for the design, implementation, and evaluation of parent-education programs under Chapter 1.

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